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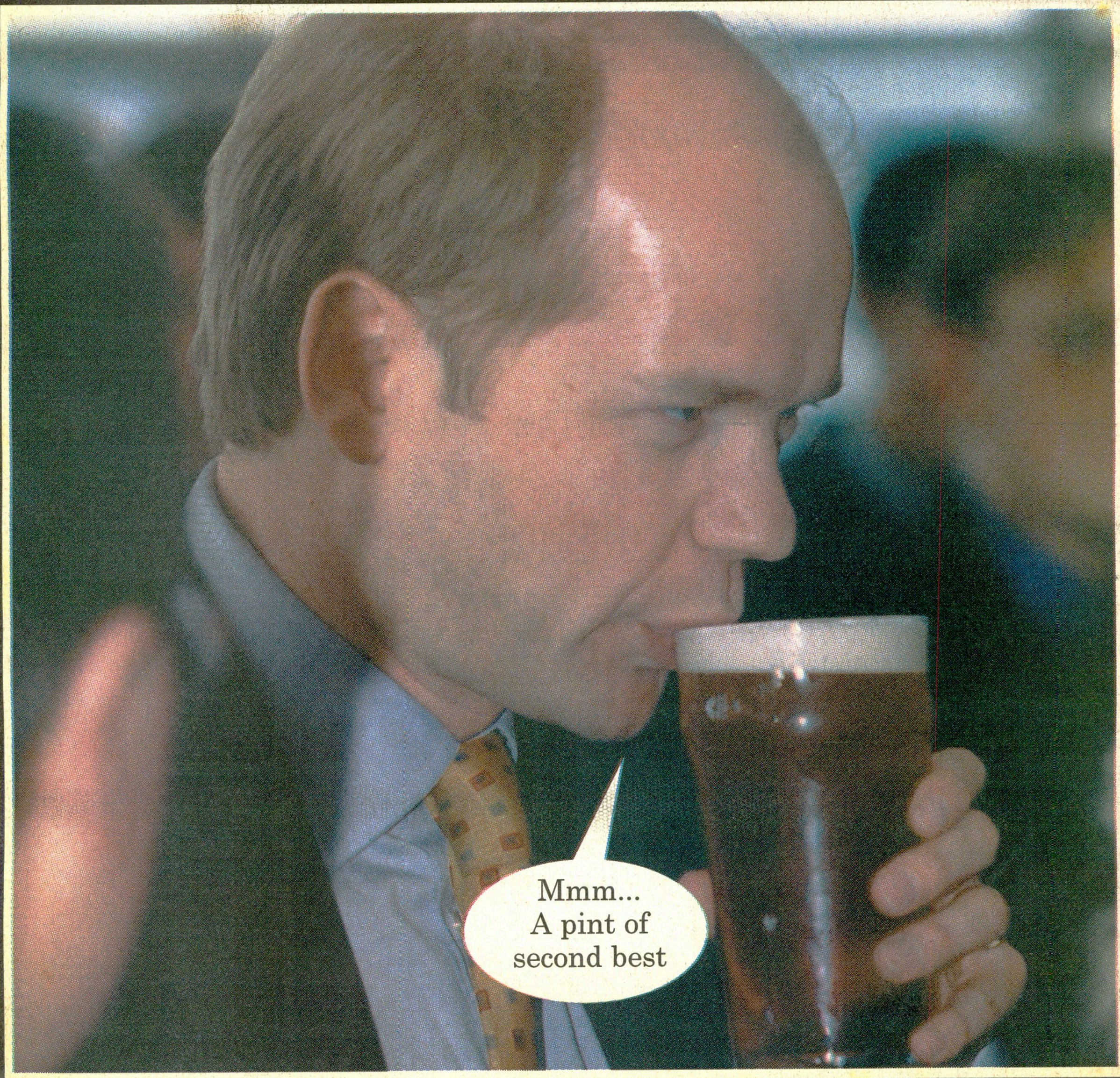

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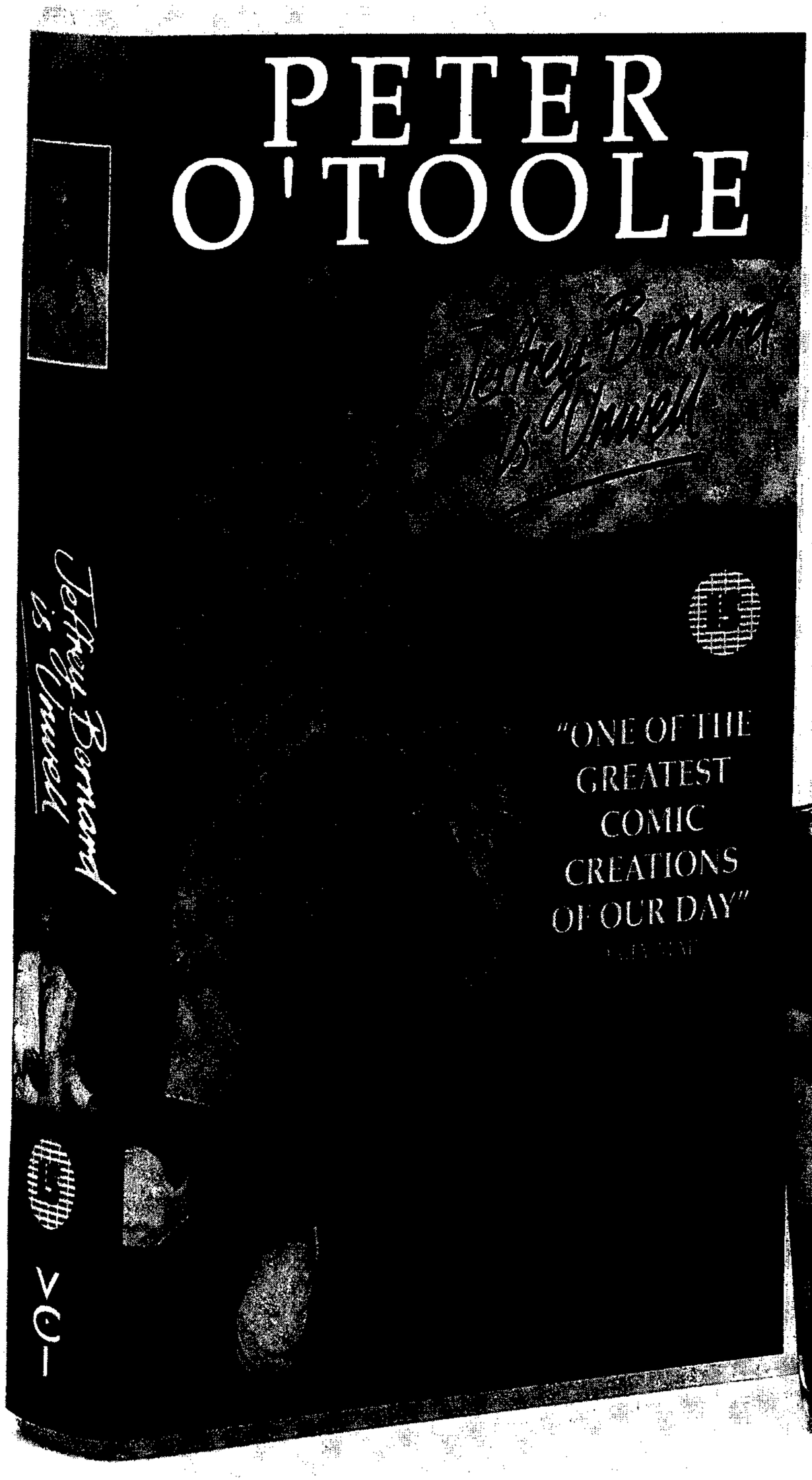

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HUNTSWOOD

Gnome

GNOME Newspapers are proud to announce that they have secured the services of the internationally-renowned cookery and lifestyle expert, Gnomella Gnome.

Gnomella will be providing her cooking tips exclusively to readers of the Daily Gnome and the Gnome on Sunday, showing how the working woman of today can still be a domestic goddess. This is the first recipe for you to cut out and keep – unless you are too busy.

Number One: Children's Tea
Fish Fingers

Fish fingers make a delightful tea-time treat for kids. I find the best way to prepare them is to buy them in the supermarket and read the cooking instructions on the back.

Garnish with tomato ketchup (don't bother with home-made – I find Heinz is perfectly acceptable!) and serve.

NEXT WEEK: How to buy biscuits.

- *How the witness bombed: Lockerbie update* 6
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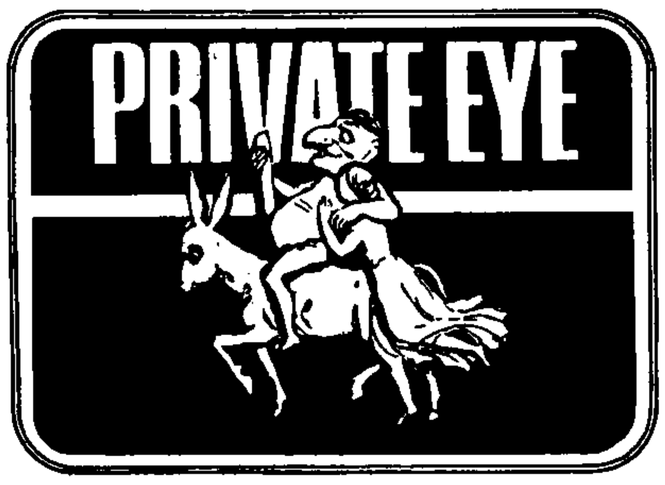
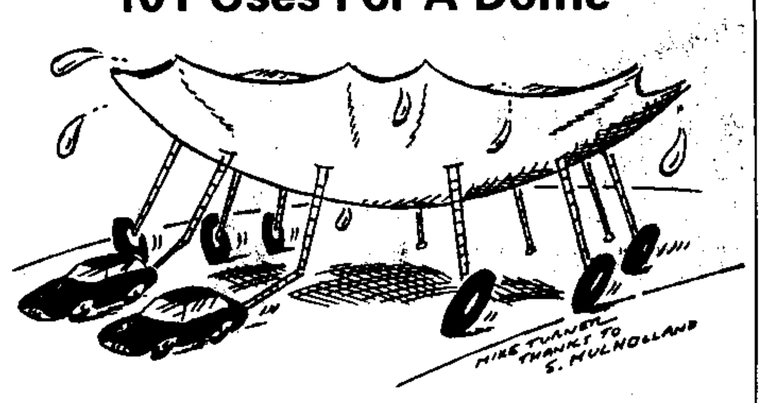


101 Uses For A Dome



'Two Jags' Prescott's Reserve Fuel Tank

THE British way of criminal justice has many unusual features. One of the most unique is the ban on any reporting of investigations or even the legal process after a defendant has been charged.

The claim is that this prevents pollution of the pristine well of justice by potentially incriminating publicity which will influence a jury months or years later.

There is little or no empirical evidence for this claim. Partly because, as jurors cannot be interviewed, how they form their decisions is a secret – a huge flaw in the current debate about jury trials.

But the evidence from the United States, where publicity about investigations and defendants continues and jurors are open to interview, is that pre-trial publicity has little impact, especially in long trials. O.J. Simpson proved that.

That said, it is interesting to note that the great storyteller Lord Archer continues to stage a thinly-disguised version of his own life in the play *The Accused* at the Theatre Royal, Windsor even *after* he has been charged with perjury and perverting the course of justice.

Archer plays the main character who is on trial. During a long and often boring evening Archer the author manages to impugn the motives of journalists who are accused of writing fiction and barristers who are told by one character: "I'm too honest to join your profession."

The entire legal proceedings are presented as a cynical farce with Archer knowingly dropping in crude titbits from his own life and jaw-dropping references to false alibis and perjury.

At the end of the play the audience is asked to decide whether the character played by the great storyteller himself is innocent or guilty of murder. Surprise, surprise. All "juries" to date have found him innocent.

Now when the saintly Kevin Maxwell was charged with fraud, the attorney-general rushed to prevent a musical based on the life and crimes of Cap'n Bob. A decision driven by pressure from Maxwell's lawyers. Yet there is silence from the present attorney-general about the Archer play. Perhaps because Archer's lawyers' see nothing faintly prejudicial in a play in which their client is found innocent and which may help life next time to imitate, er, "art".

● *Guinness is good for them? Slicker salutes Saunders, Parnes, Ronson and Lyons* 28

SIMON WALKER, the Queen's new spin doctor, was beginning to think his new job was a piece of cake. Having begun a two year secondment from British Airways in September he enjoyed settling in to his plush office and exploring Palace corridors without the risk of encountering either Brenda or the corgis, who were all still at Balmoral. Then along came Patrick Jephson, Diana's former private secretary, and his infamous book.

Buckingham Palace had actually known about the book for some time and Sir Robin Janvrin, the Queen's private secretary, had held a number of high level meetings to discuss it. The policy was to maintain a supposedly dignified silence. Janvrin and other aides had assured Brenda that the book might be unsympathetic to the Royal family but it was pretty rude about Diana as well. They reasoned it was no more than a rehash of tales already told and that public sympathy for Diana was waning, anyway. But when Walker arrived and found out about the book and the Palace's proposed silence he spun into action and oversaw production of the now infamous statement issued in the name of the Queen and Prince Charles. Despite media reports describing Brenda as furious (more spin) she was, in fact, calm and resigned after initially uttering two unroyal and uncharacteristic expletives in relation to Jephson.

As a result she took some persuading to agree to the statement and, on the advice of Downing Street, toned down some of the more personal remarks about Jephson. Prince Charles was more willing to allow his name to be attached to it, claiming the defence of his sons as justification. (Prince William's measured response to a hack's question on the subject of the book in his later TV interview was hugely exaggerated by the press.) Charles gave the go-ahead the day after returning from an unpublicised holiday in Antibes with Camilla Parker Bowles, who interestingly emerges from Jephson's memoirs with little credit. The old guard at Buckingham Palace are now indulging in a session of "I told you so", claiming that the statement was a mistake as it fuelled the story and raised the book's profile. They also claim that over-reaction may have lent Jephson's claims too much credence. Not wanting to add more fuel to the fire, a decision immediately to strip Jephson of his LVO (Lieutenant of the Victorian Order) was stayed. It will be done at a later date, once the fuss about the book has been forgotten.

LABOUR's Brighton conference was the target of more sick publicity stunts by Rebekah Wade's *News of the World*.

Delegates filing into the conference centre were offered button badge pictures of murdered schoolgirl Sarah Payne. As if the badges weren't enough, leaflets were handed out demanding the immediate enactment of "Sarah's Law" to open the paedophile register to ordinary lynch mobs and members of the public.

Wade has herself maintained a Trappist silence as anti-paedophile and anti-paediatrician mobs have gone on the rampage. The *Screws* editor spent most of her evenings in Brighton ostentatiously parading Sara Payne's mother in the main bar of the Grand Hotel. Fortunately plenty of sick-bags were on hand in the hotel lavatories.

WHILE in Brighton for the Labour conference, health secretary Alan Milburn paid a visit to the Royal Sussex Hospital, accompanied by a posse of hacks and photographers.

He listened to the usual grumbles from various doctors that funding levels weren't high enough, better wages would boost morale, etc. But Stuart Welling, the brown-nosing chief exec of Brighton Healthcare NHS Trust, dismissed the complaints. "Surely we don't need any more funding," he was heard to remark. "We're having trouble spending what we've got."

The following day, another posse of hacks and photographers descended on the Royal Sussex – to cover the story that the hospital had run out of intensive-care beds.

NEWS

LOCKERBIE UPDATE

THE amazing developments at Camp Zeist in Holland where two former Libyan intelligence agents are on trial for the murder 12 years ago of 270 people in a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie (see last *Eye*) have for the most part been glossed over in the British press.

The *New York Times*, however, has been more forthright. In a telling piece on 28 September it concluded: "The most important witness in the Lockerbie trial... was systematically torn to pieces."

The last *Eye* commented on the dubious value of the evidence of this witness: a former Libyan intelligence underling who defected to the CIA in 1988 and forgot to mention that he had important evidence about Lockerbie until two and a half years after the bombing. His evidence coincided neatly with a crucial switch in American foreign policy in which the Syrian government, originally suspected of complicity in the bombing, joined US forces in the military intervention in Iraq in what became known as the Gulf War.

Ever since the US government has put it around that it has a "star witness" whose evidence will nail the Libyan defendants once and for all. This man, Abdul Majid Giaka, a garage mechanic who once claimed to be related to King Idris of Libya, has now at last been hauled into the public gaze.

Defence lawyers claimed Majid was lying chiefly because he has been paid huge sums of money by the CIA. In a series of devastating questions which Majid could not credibly answer, they demonstrated that every time the CIA threatened to cut off his payments, Majid produced yet another piece of evidence against the accused.

His apparently relevant disclosures that he had seen one of defendants with a brown Samsonite suitcase of the type on which the bomb was loaded on the doomed airliner and that he discussed with one of the defendants how to put an unaccompanied suitcase on a plane at Malta were all made in these highly suspicious circumstances.

Some of the mauling of the prosecution's star witness has been covered in some British newspapers (*Guardian* and *Independent*). There was, however, little or no British reporting of the even more remarkable performance of Harold Hendershot, the FBI agent who interviewed the star witness when the latter was finally taken off Malta by the US navy.

Questioned by the prosecution, Mr Hendershot could not even recall the dates of his interviews with Majid, let alone exactly what he revealed. It emerged to everyone's surprise that although the FBI agent had taken notes of all ten interviews he conducted, he had left them behind in Washington.

The agent was even less clear when he was asked about his inquiries in connection with Abu Talb, a convicted Palestinian terrorist who is locked up in a Swedish jail. Talb was an original suspect for the bombing, and was thought to be part of the Palestinian gang which put the bomb on the plane. Mr Hendershot agreed that he had tried to interview Talb in his prison cell.

Asked whether Talb had been linked to clothes bought in Malta which were packed in the same suitcase as the bomb, he replied: "I don't recall." Had he found in premises formerly occupied by Talb a set of clocks, watches and barometric devices? He replied: "I don't recall." Asked whether his interest in Talb had been connected to official suspicion of a Palestinian gang with no connection to Libya, he replied: "I believe that's correct."

The cross-examination of Hendershot suggests that defence lawyers have uncovered a mine of information about the authorities' investigation of suspects quite different to the men in the dock – information which is likely to emerge to the further embarrassment of the authorities when (or if) the trial proceeds.

OH, YEAH? Despite a two-year legal dispute with the Royal Family and the Spencers, Mr Jephson said that he was going ahead with publication "as a service to the late Princess and those who worked with her."

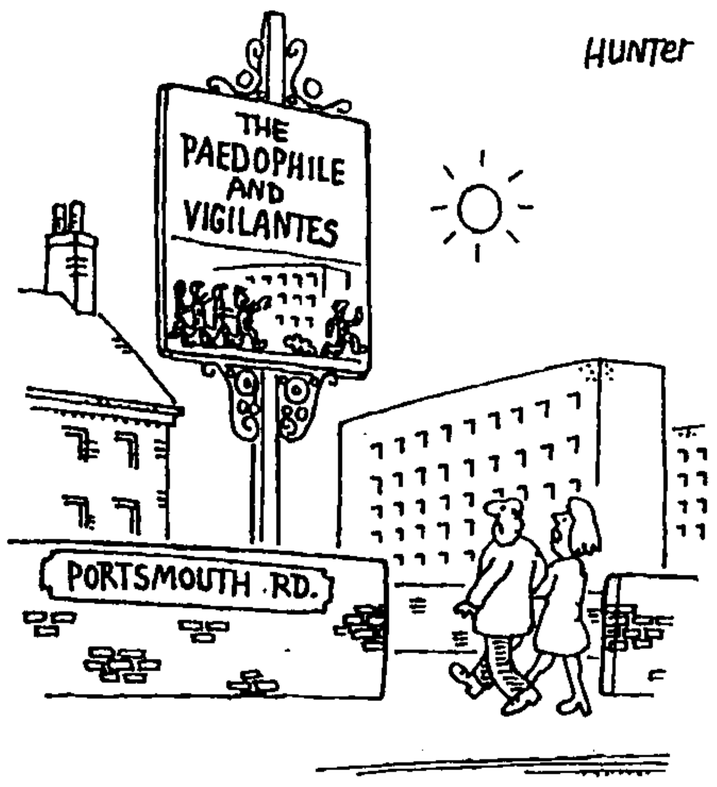
– *Daily Telegraph*

Street Of Shame

ONE of the more unpleasant effects of the *News of the Screws*'s campaign to name and shame paedophiles has been the spate of attacks on innocent people's homes.

It seems unlikely that a lynch mob of half-witted *Screws*-readers might mistake gorgeous pouting editor Rebekah Wade for a child-molester, but she is wisely taking no chances. Wade's own home has now been fortified with new locks, closed-circuit TV, bomb-film on the windows and an instant-response alarm system similar to the type normally given to high profile celebs and politicians.

All paid for, of course, by her doting employer Rupert "Cradlesnatcher" Murdoch.



THE relationship between Mohamed Fayed and *Express* editor Rosie Boycott grows ever cosier.

A few weeks ago Rosie made a rare foray to the corner of the newsroom occupied by the paper's City hacks. The purpose of her visit, it transpired, was to ensure that they ran an obscure article promoting executive boxes for corporate hospitality at Fulham FC (prop: M. Fayed).

Boycott is not renowned for her interest in football, and the financial hacks quickly smelt a rat. They refused to handle the piece, but their animated editor (who had been briefed by Fayed's latest PR Svengali, Max Clifford) was adamant. "This article must go in."

After much wrangling, the story appeared under the headline "Football Boxes Prove a Winning Formula". It was little more than a gushing puff for Fayed's club: "Fulham FC has seen growing interest in its corporate hospitality schemes... Over the years, box prices have risen in line with the club's progress through the ranks."

Since no hack was willing to put a name on the tainted story, it was buried on page 64 without a byline. But Clifford and Fayed were still delighted with the coverage.

No doubt Boycott will get her reward if, as seems increasingly possible, the phoney Pharaoh buys the Express Group from milord Hollick after the next general election.

NEWS that village shops might be forced out of business by a deal between WH Smith, Tesco and Safeway which could make it uneconomic for small independent retailers to sell magazines was given ample coverage in the *Mail* on 21 September: a full page feature and a comment piece in the leader column.

The *Mail* threw up its hands and confessed to an interest in the story: "Readers will understand that the *Mail* – in common with every other newspaper – has a particular interest. Of course we don't want the newsagent network undermined."

Fine words – but a consideration which failed to register when the *Mail's* owner, Associated Newspapers, launched *Metro*, the free tabloid given to commuters. It has wreaked havoc on the businesses of small newsagents operating at metropolitan stations.

DURING Peter Preston's long reign as editor of the *Grauniad*, the paper was famous for never sacking anyone. His son Ben Preston, acting editor of the *Times*, clearly has a rather different approach.

The award-winning food writer Frances Bissell, who has been "the *Times* Cook" for the past 13 years, arrived home from a funeral in America a few weeks ago to find an email from her boss at the paper's Weekend section, Jane Wheatley. "You will by now have read the editor's letter," it began.

Bissell could find no trace of any such letter, and had to ring Preston's office to ask his secretary to fax it over. "We have come to the reluctant conclusion," he wrote, "that we must bring your distinguished period with *The Times* to a close." The paper would run one more of her columns the following weekend, after which she'd be unemployed.

No reason was given for this startlingly abrupt sacking, apart from a few vague phrases about the forthcoming "reorganisation" of the paper's Saturday supplements. According to Wapping gossip, however, the real reason is that Jane Wheatley – who arrived from Australia only three months ago – wanted to bring in a hackette from Down Under, one Jill Dupleix.

Only a week ago, in a letter to a reader who had asked abut Bissell's disappearance, Ben Preston referred to her "long and distinguished" service. Not so long and distinguished, however, that he or anyone else had the decency to tell her face to face that she was no longer wanted at the new dumbed-down *Times*.

In his letter firing her, Preston told Bissell that Jane Wheatley "will be in touch shortly to discuss the guest list for a valedictory dinner". Bissell replied that she didn't think the loss of her livelihood was "a cause for celebration". She has decided to sue the paper for unfair dismissal instead.

WHICH three "showbiz" hackettes are so short of stories they are reduced to printing gossip, without any of the details even the laziest journalists usually provide – such as, er, names?

When Matthew Wright left the *Mirror* to host his own chat show on Channel 5, little did anyone imagine how sorely he would be missed. He has his three young female successors, collectively known as "3am", to thank for this nostalgia.

While Jessica, Eva and Polly lack courage in their convictions, they are not afraid to annoy the hell out of their readers by posing scurrilous rumours as questions in their cringe-worthy feature, "Wicked whispers".

"Which handsome multi-millionaire – who has an impending marriage to a beautiful model – swings both ways?" they titter. "Which footie star was plagued by a bunny-boiling TV reporter sent to cover a story about him? Which strapping actor from Down Under provides his own cheering squad in bed?" We don't know girls, that's what you're paid to tell us.

Answers may be sought from hacks who understand the basic principles of journalism. On the same day that 3am sniggered: "Which under-18 rock star's daughter was so out of it at a club that her sister's boyfriend had to arrange for her to be taken home?", the *Daily Mail's* Ephraim Hardcastle reported that Jade Jagger's boyfriend Dan Macmillan organised transport home from the Groucho Club for her half sister Elizabeth, who was tired after a modelling trip to New York.

TO accompany its review of the Royal Academy's Apocalypse exhibition, the *Times*'s arts section carried a photo of "Hell" by the Chapman brothers which showed semi-naked bodies being thrown into gas chambers by Nazi soldiers. One victim on the righthand side, bloodied and battered, sported a full set of male genitalia.

The photo also appeared on page 9 of the main section on the same day, illustrating a news story about the exhibition – but with the poor chap's genitalia removed. The Photoshop-savvy picture editor had, however, left in the gas chambers. Apparently the *Times*'s policy these days is that readers of the news pages can be exposed to graphic representations of mass slaughter, but must under no circumstances be allowed a glimpse of male nudity.

THE *Times* gave half a page to its obituary of Konrad Kujau, the man who forged the Hitler diaries and flogged them to the *Sunday Times*. Strangely, however, it said nothing about Rupert Murdoch's personal involvement in the fiasco.

On the Saturday evening before the *Sunday Times* was due to publish its great scoop, senior figures at the paper learned to their horror that Lord Dacre (aka Hugh Trevor-Roper), who had previously authenticated the diaries, now thought they were fakes. As veteran hack Phillip Knightley records in his autobiography, *ST* executive Brian MacArthur scuttled off to ring the Dirty Digger – only to return to the editor's office a few moments later with a surprised look on his face. "I told him about Dacre," he said. "He's not worried. He doesn't want to remake the paper. He just said 'Fuck Dacre'."

Publication went ahead – and, since the diaries were indeed crude forgeries, Murdoch ended up not having to pay a penny for them. Robert Harris's book *Selling Hitler* quotes Murdoch's two comments on the affair: "Circulation went up and it stayed up. We didn't lose money or anything like that"; and, "After all, we are in the entertainment business."

Why is *The Times* so coy about mentioning its proprietor's brilliant epigrams – and his role in masterminding this journalistic triumph?

***DAILY MAIL* critic Michael Coveney wrote a long and strongly-worded piece for the *Stage* newspaper a couple of weeks ago, excoriating his colleagues for their prejudice against new musicals. In future, he commanded, they should attend these shows with an open and attentive mind and judge them on their merits.**

The chastened critics were duly on their best behaviour at the next musical, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, whch opened a week later. All except one hard-hearted reviewer, who decided that he preferred to keep his mind closed and sloped off three-quarters of the way through the performance.

"Could this possibly be the next West End rocky horror hit?" he wrote the following morning. "No, it couldn't, if you sat through the promising, then flat, then hopeless first night last night... Divided sexuality meets divided political identity. The plot then goes completely incomprehensible." Especially if one missed half of the second act, of course. Curiously, however, he neglected to mention his dereliction of critical duty in leaving early.

Who was this miscreant? Step forward, heading rapidly for the exit, Michael Coveney of the *Daily Mail*.

OBN SPECIAL

***MIRROR* writer Quentin Willson ("The Columnist The Car Industry Fears") took *arslikhan* to dizzy new heights last month when he wrote about meeting Formula 1 boss Bernie Ecclestone – he of the £1m cheques to Labour – at the Italian grand prix in Monza.**

Willson confessed that for years he has felt like a pudding because, as a TV newcomer, he once declined an invitation to do a voice-over for the Formula One Constructors' Association end-of-year video because he didn't think he knew anything about F1.

"I'm probably the only man in the world daft enough to say no to Bernie Ecclestone," drooled the fearless columnist. "And in the car game that's not a very bright thing to do.

"If you haven't already heard of him, Mr Ecclestone is probably one of the richest men in Britain and he also completely and utterly controls Formula One. Bernie, therefore, is a man to be taken very seriously indeed."

Standing in the pits at Monza and suddenly finding himself next to Ecclestone, Willson was overcome. "I took a deep breath... and said meekly: 'Mr Ecclestone, there's something I'd like to get off my chest.' He listened patiently to my rambling confession, then broke into a broad grin and said: 'Quentin, no offence taken. You did the right thing. Because success in life is all about knowing your own limitations. And thanks for being so honest.'

"He was utterly charming. I was left rooted to the spot, disarmed by the man's approachability. So why so much inner torment? Well, it's because I hate offending people, especially when they've flattered you by asking you to do a job for them."

The message to the car industry is clear: if you want Willson on side, offer him a voice-over.

BRANSON PICKLE

EVEN NOW, with his reputation under closer scrutiny than ever, Sir Richard Branson can't stop telling blatant fibs.

"There is no link between the People's Lottery and *any* of my business interests, either privately or through the Virgin companies," he wrote to the *Times* last week, replying to a suggestion by William Rees-Mogg that he was not the sort of chap who ought to be entrusted with the national lottery.

But what of Beardie's promise to put up a £50m guarantee against possible losses? "As I have said for some time, it was not going to be a personal guarantee from me. In order to be good enough for a national institution, and not reliant on one individual, it needed to be a bank guarantee, backed by the major suppliers. This is what the lottery commission has now been given."

So how did people get this erroneous impression that Branson himself would put up the £50m if necessary? Er, perhaps because they believed Sir Richard Branson.

On 24 August, the day after the lottery commission announced its verdict, Branson told the London *Evening Standard* he had immediately assured the commissioners that the extra cash would be found: "I said I would give a personal guarantee that we will raise the money. I have got personal assets and Virgin assets and it would be personal assets I would pledge." He told a similar story to the *Mirror*: "If it means we will have to pledge some personal property then so be it. Fortunately, I'm well off enough to be able to take some personal risks on it."

So much for his claim now that "it was not going to be a personal guarantee from me".

For a man allegedly worth more than £2bn, finding £50m should have been no trouble. But Branson's "personal assets" are tied up in family trusts based in sunny havens such as the British Virgin Islands. If the Inland Revenue believed that Branson exercised any control over these trusts (by being able to withdraw £50m at will, say), his huge tax savings would be jeopardised.

There was also the looming problem of Tom Bower's unauthorised biography, which was expected to cast serious doubt on Branson's integrity and trustworthiness. By mid-September, Beardie realised that using £50m of "his own money" (even if he could lay hands on such a sum) would bring further unwelcome attention to his opaque financial arrangements. Three of his People's Lottery suppliers – Cisco, Energis and Compaq – agreed to take responsibility instead by guaranteeing a £50m bank loan from Lloyds TSB.

And so, having originally offered to stump up all the extra dosh himself, Branson ended up providing none of it.

MEANWHILE Branson has finally written his "reply" to the *Daily Mail*'s week-long serialisation of Tom Bower's book. Denying Bower's claim that most companies in the Virgin Group are duds, he boasts of "success" stories such as, er, Virgin Trains, which is "set to revolutionise the train market in the UK".

Perhaps realising that this is likely to provoke incredulous guffaws from *Mail* readers, Beardie cites another example: "Virgin Direct has challenged the sleepy financial services market for ever and has brought cheaper mortgages and a far more competitive approach to the whole area."

A glance at Virgin Direct's latest accounts, filed at Companies House three weeks ago, suggests the financial services market needn't lose too much sleep. Sales fell from £577m in 1998 to £518m last year, while losses rose from £20.3m to £24.4m. The losses are financed by loans from Branson's partner, Australian insurance company AMP, which had to increase its support for Virgin Direct from £50m to £72m while putting up a further £27.5m as an indemnity against future shortfalls.

Is it any wonder Virgin Direct's chief executive Mark Lund left the company at the end of July after only five months in the job?

THE "non-denial denial" is one of Richard Branson's favourite tricks, and there was a splendid example in his letter to the *Sunday Telegraph* last weekend.

In reply to an extract from Tom Bower's book, Branson insisted that "I am not Voldemort" – a reference to the evil wizard in the Harry Potter stories, who is nowhere mentioned in the Bower tome. Having sorted that out, Beardie turned to more serious allegations: "Nor have I ever lied to the Civil Aviation Authority about anything, least of all a fictitious hearing about Moscow in 1988 as Mr Bower mistakenly states."

In fact Bower's book refers to a case from 1998, which the *Sunday Telegraph* accidentally misprinted as 1988. This allows Branson to mock the entire story as "fictitious". But the only fiction involved came from Branson himself, who was questioned by the Civil Aviation Authority in November 1998 about his application to run regular Virgin flights from Heathrow to Moscow. Counsel for British Midland, Branson's rivals for the route, asked him about Virgin's written submission that an Airbus 321 would be used.

"Do you have any A321s available?"

"We have available both A321s and A320s," Branson replied. After further prodding, however, he admitted that this was untrue. "We do not have any A321s at the moment, no... I wish counsel wouldn't ask questions like this." Such technical matters were beyond his competence, he explained. So were financial questions, as he revealed when asked about the economic viability of his plan. "If you are going to do figures, I honestly do not know the difference between net and gross." A point the lottery commissioners will no doubt bear in mind when considering the financial promises made by his People's Lottery.

IF Prince Charles does succeed in jailing his former housekeeper Wendy Berry, who faces arrest for publishing her memoirs in defiance of a court injunction, it will be largely thanks to the efforts of patriotic hack Andrew Alderson.

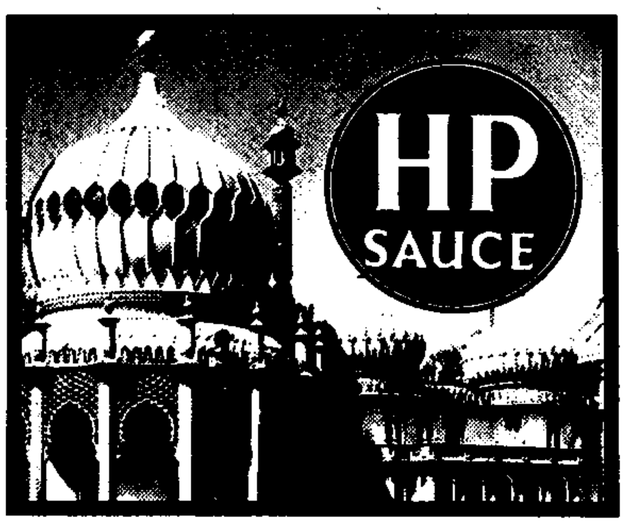
In February 1996, as chief reporter of the *Sunday Times*, Alderson discovered that the fugitive servant had returned from her North American exile and was now living in Castleblayney, Ireland. He promptly supplied details of her whereabouts to Prince Charles's solicitor, Henry Boyd-Carpenter, helpfully adding that she regularly crossed the border to shop in Northern Ireland, where she could be arrested. The lawyer and the prince duly thanked the hack for the tip-off but failed to catch the elusive Berry.

Alderson is now chief reporter for the *Sunday Telegraph*, and last week he tracked her down again – this time to Thornton, Merseyside. Once again he hastened to give her address to St James's Palace. "We are very grateful to the *Sunday Telegraph* for informing us of Wendy Berry's whereabouts," the prince's spokesman said. "We will pass the details to the appropriate people as soon as possible."

Berry herself was less delighted on being doorstepped by the tireless sleuth for the second time in five years. "I can't really say anything," she told Alderson. "I know you want a good story but you could get me into trouble."

Indeed he could. One hopes that the Prince of Wales will find some way of expressing his gratitude: a little something in the next honours list, perhaps?

"Hi, Jennifer – are you enjoying taking the art therapy class?"



ACCORDING to BBC political editor Andrew Marr, Labour's big conference bust up over pensions was down to a couple of union barons holding Tony Blair over a 1970s-style burning brazier. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As the stand off over pensions developed between the unions and the brooding figure of chancellor Gordon Brown in the preceding week, Tony Blair's aides leapt into action. They heaped pressure on Brown to show some "flexibility" – ie give pensioners a few more quid in time for Christmas.

Exasperated at their inability to shift "Iron Brun", they hoped Labour's poll collapse might persuade him to be more malleable. But how wrong could they be. By the time the brothers and sisters had gathered in Brighton, 10 Downing Street was convinced that the union barons – Rodney Bickerstaffe and John Edmonds – were ready to deal. As indeed they were.

By conference Tuesday Bickerstaffe and Edmonds had a form of words which included reference to the dread "earnings link", but that was sufficiently vague to allow Number 10 to give them its blessing. The union resolution would be debated the following day and be passed, it was thought, without fuss or effect. But neither Blair nor the union barons had reckoned on the cold fury of Gordon Brown.

Returning from the IMF meeting in Prague, the chancellor immediately announced that the unions would get their resolution over "my dead body". A flunkey was then sent to Labour's NEC meeting in a room downstairs. He announced that the unions had withdrawn their motion for "further consideration". But there had been no withdrawal and the union chiefs went ballistic, refusing now to budge despite Brown's increasingly desperate pleading.

Brown then asked Dennis Skinner to have a word with his old friend "Bick" to get him to withdraw his offending resolution; but the wily old Beast of Bolsover "gently declined" the chancellor's request. Surprisingly, Brown appeared to have overlooked the small matter of Bick's new job: the general secretary of Unison, Britain's biggest union, is to take over from Jack Jones as full time campaigner for Britain's 11 million pensioners in a few months' time.

Even as the pension debate got underway, a final bid was made to sway delegates. Pensions minister Alastair Darling took centre stage in a stacked "question and answer" session, while overwhelmingly pro-government speakers were selected from the floor. Veteran left-winger Tony Benn was prevented from speaking, despite waving his hand in the air longer than anyone else.

After the defeated Brown staggered off stage he rested his crestfallen head on the shoulder of his new wife Sarah. Well he might. After years of humiliation the union chiefs had bitten back – and for once Tony Blair wasn't protesting.

A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS...

Health

DRUG MAKERS and sellers led the corporate charge on the Labour party conference – and health ministers of various rank offered no resistance at all.

John Denham spoke on the New Health Networks platform sponsored by Superdrug, while John Hutton talked about the mental health act for the Zito Trust, sponsored by Eli Lilly, the Prozac people.

Meanwhile Pfizer, the Viagra people, ran the most extensive programme of all and kept a raft of ministers up (on their feet anyway). Hutton spoke on mental health; Lord Hunt talked about "pain"; Denham tackled "primary care" and Paul Marsden MP discussed "elderly care".

Secretary of state Alun Milburn showed the greatest staying power, however. He spoke for the Fabians on "modernising the NHS" (sponsored by Aventis, the neutral-sounding name of the giant drug and GM firm created by the merger of Germany's Hoechst and France's Rhone Poulenc). He also talked about "generating patient empowerment in the new NHS" for the NHS Alliance sponsored by Merck Sharp and Dohme.

Milburn seemed to go out of his way to praise Pfizer, however. Talking in front of their placards one lunchtime, he went on at length about Pfizer as "an extremely important investor", explaining that drugs firms are "important not just for the health, but also for the wealth" of the nation. The company must have been delighted to hear him say he didn't subscribe to the argument about "getting the drugs bill down". Shame, then, that delegates at the Pfizer bash started to ask hostile questions about continued privatisation, private finance initiative schemes and budget cuts in the NHS.

A flustered Milburn was left claiming he had the "guts to make the leap of faith" into using private hospitals to shore up the NHS.

Trains

ONE of the grimmest sights of the whole conference had to be a grinning Cherie Blair posing for a photo with executives from Railtrack and First Group, two of the firms closely involved in the Paddington rail disaster.

An hour later transport supremo John Prescott made an emotive speech to conference describing his feelings as he "talked to those families" and "walked among the wreckage" after the crash. He promised a "watershed in rail safety".

His underling Keith Hill then appeared on a Railtrack-sponsored platform alongside Railtrack boss Gerald Corbett under the heading "Mind the gap: incentives for investment". Lord (Larry) Whitty, now a parliamentary under secretary of state, also spoke on traffic-taming for Transport 2000 on a platform sponsored by First Group.

Pensioners

WHILE enraged senior citizens savaged the pensions minister Jeff Rooker at a fringe meeting, the Fabians went ahead with a meeting hardly designed to reassure them. The title of treasury secretary Stephen Timms' talk? "Can We Afford Long Term Care."

Timms was joined by Lord (David) Lipsey, whose one-man "minority report" at the royal commission on long-term care insisted that old people should have to sell their homes and cash in their savings to pay for residential care. This meeting was sponsored by health and life insurance firm PPP, which has a vested interest in government failure to support old people.

PPP has good reason to warm to Labour at the moment. On 11 September another health minister, Gisela Stuart, announced a major private contract in the NHS: Axa insurance, PPP's parent, was awarded the £68m contract to run Labour's controversial "NHS Direct" phone line.

The Euro

A SQUILLIONAIRE with a big role at conference was Paul Adamson, of Adamson BSMG Worldwide. Labour's accounts reveal that Adamson is a donor of "£5,000 or more" for the second year running.

Adamson BSMG sponsored a fringe meeting of the Foreign Policy Centre on "How to win the Euro Referendum", with Adamson himself in the chair. The FPC has Tony Blair as a patron, Robin Cook as its president and Mark Leonard, Labour's "rebranding Britain" ideologue, as its director. Labour Lords Levy and Paul are on the advisory board.

They face an uphill struggle in fighting for a win in a future Euro referendum because of suspicion that the EU is an unaccountable, distant organisation wholly at the mercy of big business and lobbying special interests. So who better to front the pro-Euro debate than Adamson, whose firm lobbies for, er, big business and special interests at the European level?

Adamson BSMG advertises itself with the slogan "Managing Government". Its brochure offers firms "lobbying/advocacy" including "developing contacts with key officials". Adamson BSMG boasts: "The experience and contacts we have built up while working with the European Commission, European Parliament and the Council of Ministers give us an 'insider's view'." And the firm brags about some extraordinary lobbying efforts. While John Prescott tried to defend petrol taxes from the green point of view, Adamson proudly announces: "We advised and advocated on behalf of a major US auto-maker regarding proposed new EU fuel quality emission standards."

Adamson also trumpets its involvement in forcing GM standards on the EU parliament, claiming: "We advised the European and American pharmaceutical industries in securing the adoption of key legislation in the field of biotechnology." Whether the chicken legs, quiches and devilled egg pastry shells served to Labour delegates at the FPC/Adamson meeting were full of GM materials is not known.

Lottery

CAMELOT's stall – one of the largest and flashest in Brighton – was a lonely place, with few visitors at any time of day. The lottery company's fringe meeting looked equally sad.

Originally Sue Slipman was to be joined on the platform by ex-Lambeth chief exec Heather Rabbatts. But half way through the conference the "other speaker to be announced" turned out to be Lord Charlie Falconer. Did this signify a rapprochement between the litigious Camelot and the government – or just another bad move by the wretched Falconer? Either way it seems that while Dame Helene Shovelton thinks Camelot is too sleazy to run the lottery, Lord Falconer thinks it perfect to sponsor his meeting.

"I didn't lie. I was prudent with the truth!"

THE *Guardian* and *Independent* staged their Labour conference beanos at the same time, on the same day and in the same hotel – the Brighton Metropole – as mounted police and Swat teams patrolled the perimeter fence erected to keep Labour and the great unwashed apart.

But while trying to enter the *Graunaid*'s worthy but dull thrash, Norwich MP Ian Gibson was rebuffed by officious stewards. When he told them he sometimes wrote for the paper and that should be a good enough reason for a glass of warm wine and a few words with Dame Polly Toynbee, he was simply told to "fuck off". A similar fate then befell the stooped figure of Brian Sedgemore.

As a flood of refugees joyously fled next door to the bright lights and happy throng of the *Indie* party, *Observer* editor Roger Alton and the paper's former editor Will Hutton were seen joining them.

THOUGH most newspapers covered the appearance by MI5 whistleblower David Shayler at a fringe meeting during the Labour conference, one section of his speech went unreported – an attack on certain unfriendly hacks.

"Their attitude to me has descended to the level of the playground," he declared. "I've been called a fat self-publicist. But come on, lads: we can all play that game. I could call Andrew Pierce [of the *Times*] a screaming homosexual, Dominic Lawson an incompetent idiot who wouldn't have got anywhere if it wasn't for the influence of his father or Andrew Roberts a mummy's boy who sucks his thumb."

Disgraceful – and, of course, wholly untrue. Doubtless Shayler will go down for slander, if not for breach of the official secrets act.

'Backbiter'

HOW TO BYERS INFLUENCE

TRADE secretary Stephen Byers is to be guest speaker at a £90-a-head fundraising dinner for the Labour party, to be held at the Hilton Hotel in Swindon on 23 November. As the invitation proudly reveals, the event is "kindly sponsored by Innogy plc".

Innowhat? The absurdly named company has been created by this month's separation of National Power plc into two separate halves – International Power, which deals with overseas customers; and Innogy, which inherits the domestic utilities business. But during its brief existence Innogy has already shown itself to be fully in tune with "new" Labour values.

When shareholders were sent details of the National Power split at the end of August, they were outraged to learn that Innogy's boss-designate, Ross Sayers, would get twice his annual salary of £450,000 if they voted against the demerger. His counterpart at International Power, Peter Giller, would also get £1m if the demerger was aborted.

"My pay package is in line with market practice in the UK," Sayers assured the *Mail on Sunday*. But institutional investors and pay experts claimed that this blatant financial blackmail certainly breached the spirit, if not the letter, of corporate governance codes. "It looks like a poison pill tactic to ensure the vote goes National Power's way," one grumbled. "Investors should not have to think 'this will cost us £2 million if we do not back this demerger'."

In mid-September, even before the shareholders had voted, Innogy was again causing a stir by paying £10m to "buy" the 240,000 customers of Independent Energy, a gas and electricity supplier which had gone into receivership the previous week. This was an impressive bargain-price for the main asset of a company which had been valued at £1.4bn before it collapsed. Better still, Innogy was allowed to charge a commission of anywhere between 10 and 40 percent for chasing up Independent Energy's unpaid bills, which were thought to total about £200m. These alone would more than cover the purchase price.

As soon as the deal went through, Innogy sent out an ultimatum to Independent Energy's industrial and commercial customers: their old fixed-price contracts were being torn up, and their power supply would be disconnected at once unless they signed up to new, variable contracts which would cost about £80 per megawatt-hour as against the £25 charged previously. If there's a cold snap this winter the prices could rise even higher, causing severe financial problems for Independent Energy's biggest customers – including many hospitals.

In deference to his sponsors, however, Stephen Byers is unlikely to mention any of this in his speech at Labour's "gala dinner".

SEE YOU LATER, REGULATOR

Continuing our series on the conversion of regulators to the ranks of the regulated...

CLARE Spottiswoode was the Tory government's surprise appointment in 1993 as Ofgas regulator overseeing the newly-privatised gas industry.

A Commons select committee criticised her appointment, revealing indiscreetly that at the time she was a close personal friend and travelling companion of John Mitchell, the civil servant in charge of oil and gas at the DTI, and that he had personally recommended her for the regulator's job.

In September 1998 Ms Spottiswoode left Ofgas to work "on regulation matters" for Asturix, a water company formed by the US utilities giant Enron (for Enron's devotion to the environment and other matters, see *Eyes* 979, 990 and 991). A few months later, in February 1999, she joined PA Consulting Group, an international management and technology consultancy.

On 19 September this year the British utility Anglian Water announced the formation of a new subsidiary "to offer management services to clients". Anglian chief executive Chris Mellor announced the appointment of the new company's chair with great pride, remarking, apparently seriously: "Clare Spottiswoode's background as a gas regulator will help Anglian in its push for further competition."

HACKWATCH

Long Speeches, Short Lives

October 1991: Reporting from the Tory conference at Blackpool, a correspondent for the *Toronto Star* comes over all apocalyptic. "British prime minister John Major," he reveals, "is being called upon to deliver the speech of his life."

October 1992: One week to go until another Tory conference, and the *Glasgow Herald* reports that "the Prime Minister spent much of yesterday preparing what is being billed as the speech of his life". As the great day looms, the *Daily Telegraph* warns that John Major "needs to pull out the speech of his life when he addresses the conference on Friday".

September 1993: Eleven months on, yet another Tory conference is imminent. "Mr Major will need to make the conference speech of his life," the *Daily Telegraph* reports on 6 September. Eleven days later, another thought strikes the *Torygraph*. "Mr Major... has to deliver the speech of his life at the Tory party conference in Blackpool."

October 1995: "Now it is up to John Major," the *Daily Mail* declares. "Tomorrow morning he must make the speech of his life." But what of his Labour opponent? "Blair did rather well yesterday," the *Daily Telegraph* reckons, "in the most important speech of his life." The *Observer* disagrees: Tony Blair's conference address "was not the most important speech of his life. That was last year..."

October 1996: Or next year, as the case may be. According to the *Guardian*, the prospects of a Labour government will depend on what Tony Blair says to the party conference "in what is probably the most important speech of his life". Not to be outdone, the *Independent* opines that "everything will depend on Mr Major, and, to a great extent, upon his performance at Bournemouth next Friday afternoon... He must make the speech of his life."

October 1997: The Conservatives have a new leader, but some things remain constant. "Now he faces the most important Tory party conference of all time," the *Daily Mail* announces dramatically. "William Hague will have to give the most inspiring speech of his life."

October 1998: The *Evening Standard* daringly suggests that Blair's address this year "wasn't the most important speech of his career". Shock, horror!

October 1999: The *Sunday Telegraph* dispenses some pre-conference advice to William Hague. He must "show that he is no less passionate than Mr Blair, and demonstrate the resolve of which is undoubtedly capable... It will be the speech of his life."

September 2000: As Labour delegates pack their bags for Brighton, Fleet Street's finest assess Tony Blair's task. According to Max Hastings in the London *Evening Standard*, "he is struggling to write the most important conference speech of his life". The *Guardian* argues that Blair "needs to deliver the speech of his life", while *Sunday Business* thinks that he "needs to give the speech of his life". "He must deliver the speech of his life," the *Mirror* adds.

"It is a truism," Donald Macintyre writes in the *Independent*, "to say it is probably the most important speech of his life." But none the worse for that: elsewhere in the same day's *Indie*, political hacks Andrew Grice and Barrie Clement preview "what will be the most important speech of his life so far".

Frank Field MP is so alarmed that he pens an open letter to the PM in the *Sunday People*. "Dear Tony, This week you must deliver the speech of your life. I know people always tell you that before your big party conference address – but this year it is true like never before." The morning after Blair's sweat-stained oration, however, a lone dissenting voice pipes up. "Almost everyone proclaimed it to be 'the most important speech of Tony Blair's life'," Alice Miles observes in the *Times*. "Which is rubbish of course, but makes the whole event sound more interesting."

CHURCHILL REVISITED

SAME OLD TORY

YOU cannot keep a good Tory down, especially when he is the protégé of a senior member of the party – as the case of Ben Pickering, favourite of Nick Bourne, the Conservative leader in Wales, has proved.

In June 20-year-old Pickering was forced to stand down as the Tory prospective parliamentary candidate for Swansea West following a row over a £1m gay film he planned to make through his production company, Pink Films. After a local newspaper discovered that Pickering had appealed for backers via a website which wrongly claimed that several well-known actors had already agreed to appear in the film, Labour's Rhodri Morgan used parliamentary privilege to accuse him of fraud in the assembly debating chamber.

Pickering did not step out of the limelight for long. He has now made an illustrious comeback as the chairman of Conservative Future in Wales.

FISHY STORY

AFTER the Scottish parliament announced at the end of last month that there is to be an independent public inquiry into the damage caused by filth-spewing foreign-owned Scottish salmon farms, the *Eye*'s old chum George "why me" Thomson has been "persuaded" to fall on his skewer and take early retirement.

"Why me", boss of the Scottish executive rural affairs department's salmon and freshwater division, shuffles into the twilight serenaded by glowing songs of praise from the fake fish farm companies he worked so hard for so many years to protect from public scrutiny (see *Eyes passim*).

Pubic discussion. – The public lavatories had remained locked and there were inquiries from the public as to why. The chairman had reported the matter.

Darlington & Stockton Times

NOOKS AND CORNERS

SIX million people visited the Great Exhibition during the five and a half months it was open in 1851.

This was over a million more than visited the dome in Greenwich in the first eight months of this year, even though the population was smaller and public transport less developed in the 1850s.

And now the government's monstrous extravagance at the dome is being challenged by "new" Labour's gratuitous project for the Scottish parliament building.

Only five months after we were assured it could be built for £195m, the cost of the late Enric Miralles' modified "upturned boats" is now revealed to be some £300m — none of which will come from the lottery and all of which will be provided by Scottish taxpayers. This represents such a massive increase over the Scottish office's original claim that it could be built for a mere £10m it must surely be a world record. Well done Scotland!

And what will the wretched Scottish people get for that? Why, a modified and compromised version of a pretentious and inappropriate masterpiece by a dead Catalan architect which they never asked for in the first place.

'Piloti'

TV

Panorama With Frostrup (BBC1)
A Song For Jill (BBC1)
Night Of A Thousand Shows (BBC1)

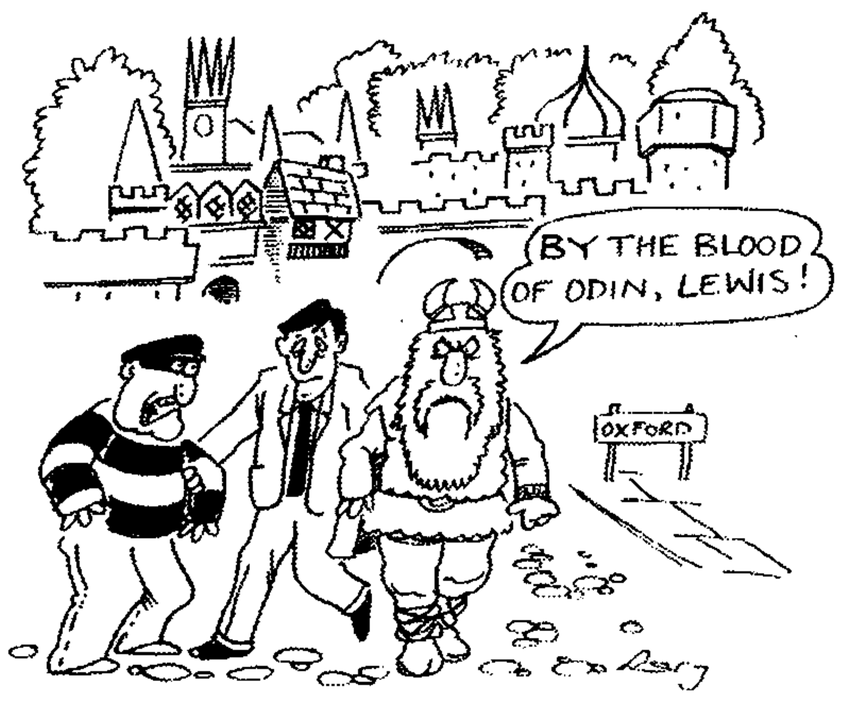
THE recent announcement that the bronchiticly erotic Mariella Frostrup will front an edition of *Panorama* about Big Brother and other voyeurism shows on TV prompted sardonic comments from columnists about Dimbleby's pin-stripe and Day's bow-tie being succeeded on the Panorama costume rail by leather trousers. Box-watching conservatives saw this as further evidence of television going to hell.

In fact, the really dodgy thing about this planned *Panorama* is not the choice of presenter — there are many reporters in the BBC news pool much thicker than Mariella — but the selection of subject. Is the rise of a new strain of entertainment programming really an appropriate subject for the BBC's premier current affairs strand? Accountants and teachers debate developments within their profession at closed-door conferences in Eastbourne. Television executives, however, have the opportunity to contemplate their navels while the public watches.

Or theoretically watches. The annual BAFTA back-slapper is, in terms of reviews and ratings, one of the least popular shows allowed a BBC1 or ITV peak-time slot. Yet the programme survives because executives want the home video of their prize-day to be available to their geographically scattered families. The trick has been to get bigger and bigger stars to present the prizes in the hope that viewers might tune in.

The use of stars to disguise a show which ought to have gone out only on the internal BBC loop fails to save two incestuous programmes going out this month. The shamelessly Dianarite **A Song For Jill** (BBC1) featured crooners of the Cliff and sub-Cliff kind belting out the favourite songs of the slain presenter of *Crimewatch*.

There were many oddities about this show — not least the possibility that this building up of a murder victim's saintliness and fame might constitute contempt of court given that a man is awaiting trial accused of killing her. And the evening's peculiarities continued with the title. *A Song For Jill* seems to be a tin-eared play on the BBC1 perennial *A Song For Europe*, but this is strange both because it subliminally suggests that Dando was equivalent to a continent and because the Eurovision programme is one of television's most notoriously tacky shows.



"Oh no, it's Inspector Norse!"

So was this. It didn't help that Ms Dando's musical taste consisted of pappy ballads. As Lionel Ritchie did "Three Times A Lady" and Marti Pellow "Love Is All Around", the proceedings resembled an improbably middle of the road edition of *Top Of The Pops* or a compilation of the song-spot moments from the *National Lottery* show. Then Cliff Richard and Elaine Paige duetted on "Miss You Nights", billed as the favourite ballad of "Jill and her fiancé Alan".

These Radio 2 moments were interspersed with scary dramatic interludes in which, for example, a thug with large knife menaced a shop assistant. More than one viewer must have assumed that the dog had sat on the channel-changer and switched sides. But these little films — revealed in the credits to have been created by a company called Alphabet Advertising — were promoting the Jill Dando Crime Institute, a criminology college with a linked charity.

Because of BBC sponsorship rules — and the risk that every charity in Britain will demand 50 minutes of BBC1 time — everyone was careful to make clear that the show was "raising the profile" of the new charity rather than actually promoting it. At the end, grimly grinning hostess Carol Smillie declared that Jill would have loved all this, the great sentimental lie on these occasions. Jill Dando, we can be sure, would much rather be married to Alan and competing with Carol Smillie to host terrible programmes like this one.

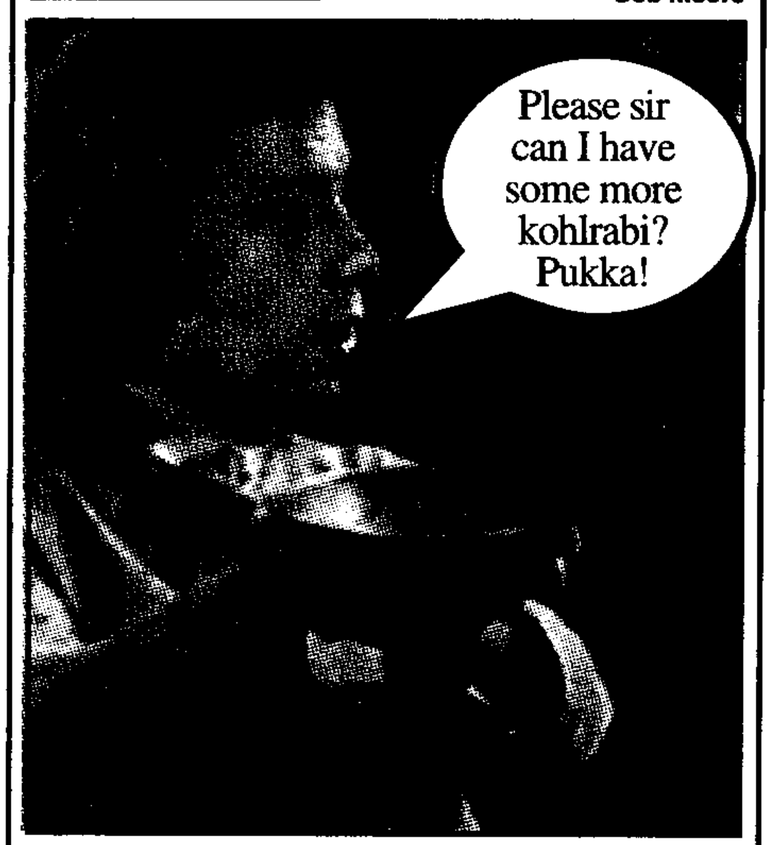
Dando, if alive, would almost certainly have been fronting **Night Of A Thousand Shows** (BBC1), which takes industry insularity one step even beyond *A Song For Jill* in being a tribute not to a BBC presenter but to a BBC building. Marking several decades of the existence of Television Centre, the show features anecdotes from celebrities about their Favourite Dressing Room or Most Embarrassing Moment During A Recording.

Because so many of the stars are dead, those who BBC Contracts couldn't get hold of are impersonated by the living. At the recording, Reeves and Mortimer's recreation of a Morecambe & Wise sketch was so terrible that Ronnie Barker demanded a personal assurance from DG Greg Dyke that it would not be screened. Greg said that he didn't make those kinds of decisions. Perhaps. But maybe Greg could send a little memo round suggesting fewer shows looking up the medium's own arse.

'Square Eyes'

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



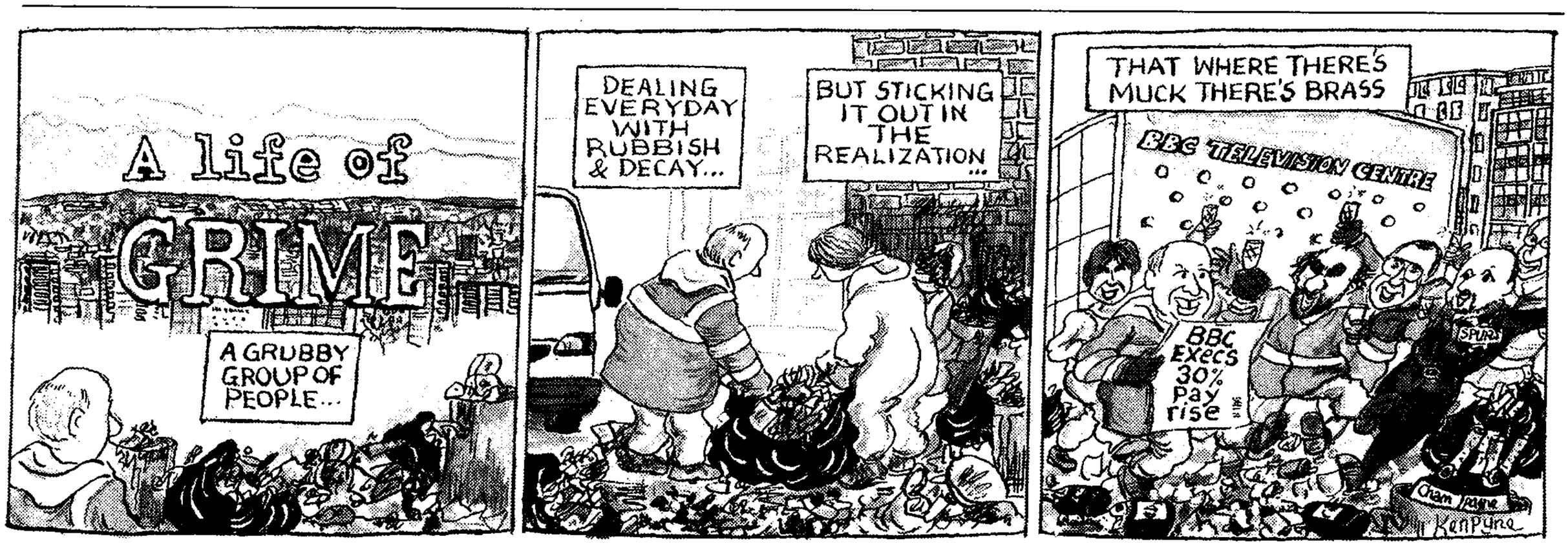
Jamie Oliver Twist

DUMB BRITAIN

MORE challenging exchanges from *This Morning*, where Richard and Judy continue to bend over backwards to help their quiz contestants.

Richard: Who sang *New York, New York* and *Chicago*?
Contestant: Er…
Richard: His nickname was "Old Blue Eyes"…
Contestant: I don't know.
Judy: What is a red admiral?
Contestant: [*As Judy flaps her arms about*] A bird?
Judy: It's not a bird but it flaps about…
Contestant: Pass.

Richard: In which US state will you find Los Angeles, San Francisco and lots of big bears?
Contestant: Florida.
Richard: No it's on the other side…
Contestant: Oh… er…
Judy: [*Sings*] "I wish that they could be da da da da girls!"
Contestant: New York.
Judy: Where is the Acropolis?
Contestant: Pass.



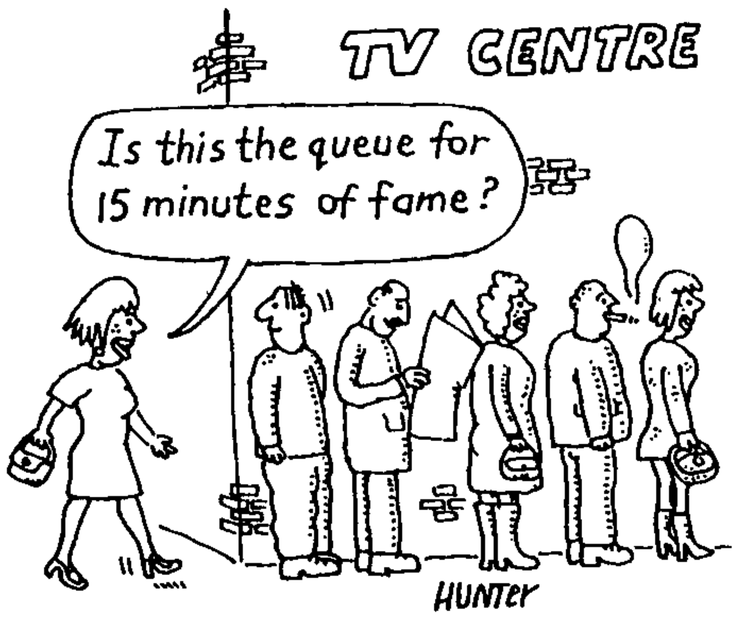
MEDIA NEWS

MORE on the *Panorama* presenter debate: the edition *Pump Wars*, about the fuel crisis, transmitted on 25 September, was presented by the very excellent Jane Corbin, but turned out to be a very bad programme indeed.

It was commissioned along with a raft of other "specials" just as the tank on Tony Hall's limo ran dry. Memos went out to teams from Radios Four and Five Live, BBC Online and the *Dimbleby Debate* demanding that they chuck away the schedule and flood the airwaves with fuel crisis coverage. In no time at all we were all bored to death as we sat marooned in front of our screens.

By the time *Panorama* made it to air, the story itself would either have to move on or die. But two weeks since the crisis started, one week since it ended, *Panorama* hacks were still shoving together lorry convoy and panic buying shots, hastily borrowed from regional telly tape libraries – 40 minutes of pictures for 10 minutes of new material.

This feeble effort got an audience of 4.1m and a pat on the back from Tony Hall who likes to see everyone pulling together on a Big Story (even if nobody bothers to ask what all the coverage is for). But if *Panorama* is forced to follow the "news agenda" more closely, how many real scoops will fail to make it to air? If the programme gets no more than the paltry £100,000 Dyke has promised it, then news-led pieces are bound to crop up more often. And then, how soon will they decide that 40 minutes is far too big a slot for such a shrinking programme? The presenter is not the problem.



BBC hacks are reeling from the news that their expense accounts have gone into free fall.

According to a memo from head of news Tony Hall circulating White City and Broadcasting House, all claims from 1 January 2001 "will be based on actual expenses incurred" (so no more cadging a lift and claiming the rail fare) and the higher mileage rate for cars over 2000cc will be scrapped.

Even worse there will be a "£55 limit across the BBC on the cost of overnight accommodation" (barely enough pay for a provincial B&B, say the hacks); and anyone not having lunch on BBC premises will no longer be able to claim any money back.

The first results of this directive will be an increase in the bureaucracy budget – just what Greg Dyke was supposed to reduce. Meanwhile trebles all round for the very top echelon of the BBC whose expenses appear to be untouched!

BBC Wales is continuing to act as the PR arm of Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party: hardly a day goes by without the party's leader, Ieuan Wyn Jones MP AM, hitting the airwaves.

So when Welsh secretary Paul Murphy took the podium at Labour's Brighton jamboree and launched into a critique of the nats, dubbing them "daffodil Tories", the BBC in Cardiff decided that TV licence payers in Wales needed protecting from such propaganda. Not one word of Murphy's strictures found its way into the nightly flagship TV news programme, *Wales Today*. Instead viewers were treated to a groundbreaking report of Labour's traditional Welsh night piss-up by political correspondent David Cornock.

Head of news and current affairs at BBC Wales, Aled Eirug (see *Eyes passim*), is a former nationalist parliamentary aide who devilled for two Plaid MPs in the 1980s. Perhaps a little light reading of the corporation's public service remit would not go amiss.

GOING LIVE

IT WAS 0800 and GMTV's newsreader announced: "We're going live to the GMTV newsroom" for the latest on the Greek ferry disaster.

In fact the GMTV Newsroom turned out to be a group of terminals under a cardboard sign that says "GMTV Newsroom". But it was very early in the morning and, aside from a hack reading out wire copy, the place was almost deserted.

AD NAUSEAM

AT LAST! Some genuine originality in advertising. Let's take a minute to applaud the lag who decided that ex-*EastEnders* actress Patsy Palmer would be just right to persuade us to join the police – a leap of imagination that borders on surrealist genius.

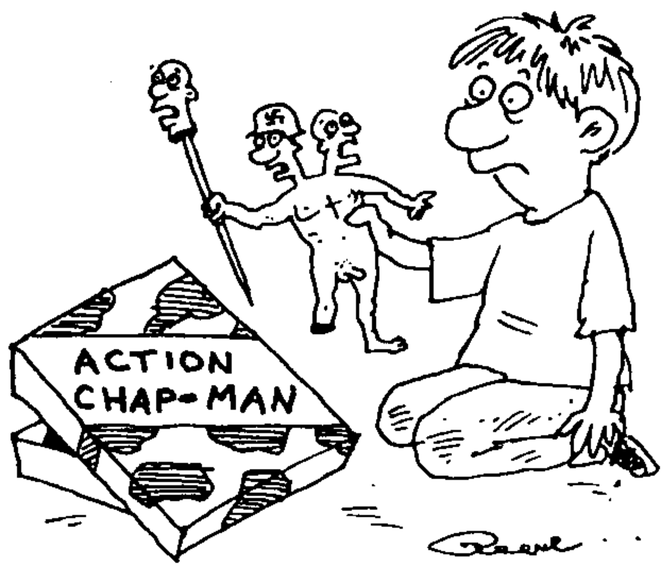
It comes as part of the government's new push for police recruitment, which has swamped print and screen for a fortnight now. Needless to say "new" Labour fave M&C Saatchi was hired, and the resultant work stars, alongside Palmer, recently-sacked football manager John Barnes, the England cricket captain Nasser Hussain and newsreader Jon Snow.

The gist of it all is that the various celebs, for all their superhuman talents (reading the news, shrieking at Ricky, etc), couldn't do a policeman's job, leading us neatly to the catchline: "Could You?" To which the answer is almost undoubtedly "no".

Taking the campaign as a whole the job requirements include the probity of a priest, the courage of a martyr and a cooler head than a chess champion. Moreover, readers may recall that the last famous Met branding campaign was strangely familiar, featuring an officer being spat at square in the face by an amply-pierced yob. The catch at that time was "Could you turn the other cheek?" It was much better, and it still didn't work; so it's hard to see how M&C intends to trump it by jettisoning four words and using its well-oiled publicity machine to trumpet the campaign on the *Nine O'Clock News*.

Especially as it appears there wasn't a recruitment crisis anyway. Dave Rogers, vice-chairman of the Police Federation, said that not only did he dislike the ads – "they give a very negative view" – but that there were plenty of people applying to join the force. "But once they see the pay package and the conditions they don't follow it through." It must be all the more galling for prospective bobbies, therefore, to see the home office pumping £7m in the first year into M&C coffers to churn out more vignettes from the doe-eyed soul-searching school of advertising.

The published recruitment targets are 9,000 in three years, which means that if the ad spend were paid to the new recruits themselves, each would stand to gain a pay rise of around £2,000. But what with the respect they will all be feeling for Patsy Palmer, that's likely to be overlooked.



Pseuds Corner

The 1906 La Romanée is like an out-of-body experience. I was struck not by the usual manured farmyards on the nose but by a soft, delicate, sweet fruitiness accompanied by a hologram of myself eating a raspberry sherbet fountain at the end of Brighton Pier.

RORY ROSS
Weekend Telegraph

The other day, my eye was caught by a sudden gleam across the other side of the street. A ray of sunlight had lit up the golden tresses of a girl. She was walking with the springy step of a young creature who, for the moment at least, was at peace with the world, glad to be living and free. I looked at this picture of happiness and rejoiced. She noticed my glance of approval and answered it with a smile so timid and sweet, so innocent and sincere, that my old heart leapt with joy. I smiled back, and so we passed.

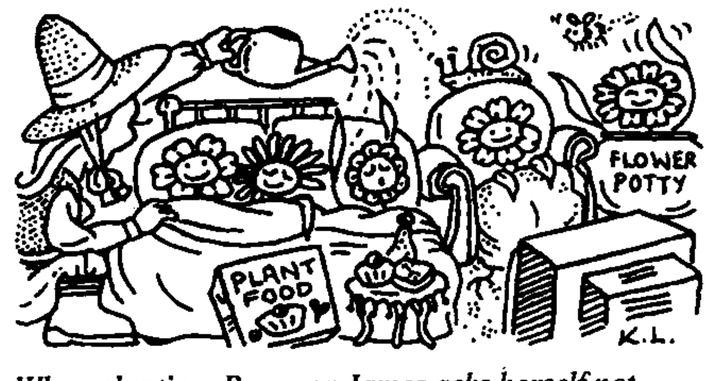
PAUL JOHNSON
Spectator

Staying at home is the new going out.

Marks & Spencer circular

Susie [Orbach]'s thesis, to simplify grossly, was that women's abreaction to the pressure of expectations – both sexual and in terms of life role, both their own and other people's – might take the form of obsessive relationships with food and body form. To liberate oneself from the patriarchal hegemony was to simultaneously be freed from the necessity of such abreactions: the sensible and the somatic were enmeshed like hand in glove.

WILL SELF
Independent on Sunday



When planting, Rosanna James asks herself not, "Will this plant look nice here?" but rather, "Will it be happy?"

Sunday Telegraph Magazine

The strangest thing about plates is that when you sit down to eat you get your own but the moment you finish it's someone else's. Plates operate in a complex world of manner, sharedness, separation – a public private thing enormously widely experienced. This makes them very special.

RICHARD WENTWORTH
"Artsway" gallery

Jay Jopling is pleased to present Drawn, a new work by Antony Gormley conceived for White Cube^2. Drawn continues to explore his obsession with the relationship between the human body and architecture (testing the firsty body against the second in the artist's terminology), making the spaces of the constructed world "felt" in unusual confrontational ways.

This exhibition of a single work in eight randomly orientated parts identifies the taut line between the body's ability to explore his obsession with the relationship between the human body and architecture (testing the first body against the second in the artist's terminology), making the spaces of the constructed world "felt" in unusual confrontational ways.

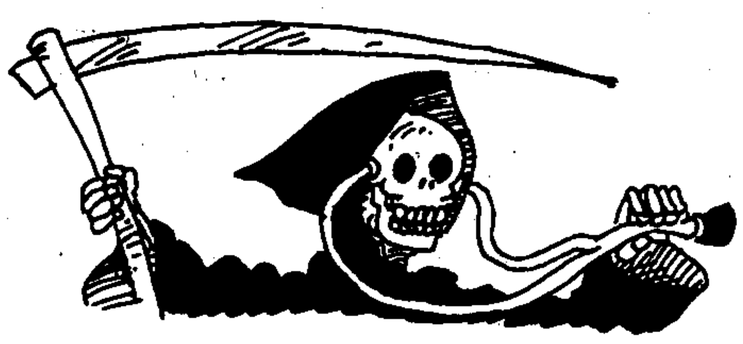
This exhibition of a single work in eight randomly orientated parts identifies the taut line between the body's ability to express freedom through extension, and architecture's compulsion to entertain. Occupying the corners of the exhibition space at White Cube^2 – where the ceiling and floor meet the walls (a place of oblivion and punishment). Gormley reinstates the body as the locus of lived experience, reinventing the room as an arena and the body itself as a battleground between inheritance and aspiration.

Press release

CONTRIBUTORS: Nigel Porter, Anon, Allan Mackie, Denis Christian, Ernie Todd, Michael D. Robinson, Harry Craske.

£10 paid for entries

DOING THE ROUNDS



IN AUGUST Findlay Scott, chief executive of the General Medical Council, wrote to 104 GMC members advising them that they must declare any post or officer-type status they hold in medical or political organisations. There was no mention of freemasonry.

This reluctance to force members to disclose masonic affiliation was reported in Eye 1010 (8 September). The GMC president's advisory committee (PAC) then met and announced, on 14 September, that members will have to declare their masonry... but only if it gets the nod from the whole council in November.

The move is unlikely to pass unopposed. Former BMA leader Sir Alexander Macara, who sits on the PAC, believes freemasonry should not be given unfair attention. "I would like to know what the justification is for singling out freemasonry when there are other organisations that are no less exclusive, in fact a great deal more exclusive, like the Opus Dei of the Roman Catholic Church."

Dr Macara is a former Bristol freemason and close friend of disgraced heart surgeon James Wisheart.

● ALAN MAYNARD, director of health policy at the University of York, writes to the Eye with his own interpretation of how dodgy gynaecologist Richard Neale was able to get away with it for so long (Eye 1008).

"It seems that when Northallerton Trust discovered both his awful results in Canada and his incapacity to improve in North Yorkshire, they paid him over £100,000 in 'compensation' and gave him a good reference so he could continue his pain and misery elsewhere. But was NHS management to blame for this?"

Not entirely, argues Maynard, citing the ridiculous regulations that bind NHS managers and which successive governments have refused to change. At present a consultant cannot be sacked without "due cause", and the disciplinary procedure is so protracted it allows doctors to appeal right up to the secretary of state. A doctor may be suspended for years on full pay, leaving no funds for a replacement and causing waiting lists to rise. Thus hospitals face further penalties for failing to meet government targets and it appears easier (and cheaper) to let a deviant keep operating.

Maynard also points out that though the GMC is embarrassingly inept at self-regulation, the royal colleges are responsible for overseeing training. Ten years ago, when minimally invasive (keyhole) surgery was introduced, training was patchy to non-existent and a great deal of harm was caused by surgeons learning the ropes. And those surgeons found guilty of serious professional misconduct by the GMC (eg the Bristol two, Neale, Rodney Ledward) don't even have their royal college affiliations withdrawn. Once a member, always a member — unless you fail to pay the annual subscription (got to keep those wine cellars stocked).

● ACCORDING to latest estimates 320,000 errors occur in the NHS each year resulting in 40,000 deaths. About half of them are preventable, but as Dr William Pickering has pointed out (Eyes passim) no one even picks up doctors' mistakes so it is impossible to learn from them.

As the whispering campaign continues in Hospital Doctor against Bristol whistleblower Steve Bolsin, he just wants to look forward: "The public and patients deserve a better system and are beginning to demand it in other countries as well."

In Geelong (Victoria, Australia), Bolsin has introduced quality assurance measures that have resulted in the lowest wound infection rate and the second lowest kidney failure rate in the published literature. Ninety three percent of the patients have their routine surgery on the day of admission, which is better than any other unit in the world, and staff receive regular feedback about their performance.

Bolsin's achievements are at odds with his portrayal as an uncooperative loner in the medical press and on Channel 4's simplistic Innocents docudrama. But he is still sceptical about the future of the NHS. "When English consultants have left Geelong and tried to implement our practices in the UK they have found the resistance to change too great. So what changes?"

M.

SIGNAL FAILURES
Future franchises

RECENT figures show how franchised rail operations on privately owned tracks are still unable to provide reliable train services, but the government and shadow strategic rail authority (SSRA) pretend not to have noticed.

Ever since private operators took over, bulletins of punctuality statistics have been accompanied by press releases from the SSRA (and its Opraf predecessor) acknowledging problems but promising jam tomorrow. A year ago franchising director Mike Grant saw the "first encouraging signs" of a turnaround in performance and looked to the rail firms to "follow through with sustained improvement". He also looked forward to better performance as a result of a 10-point plan from train operators.

Performance is now so universally mediocre even Grant seems unable to find cause for optimism. He issued without comment the latest figures, which show nearly all the 25 franchises were even less punctual between May and August than in the same period last year (after Railtrack had reportedly reduced delays caused by infrastructure). Improvements were confined to three of the smallest franchises including Cardiff Railway, now up to the unimpressive level of the others after being even worse than them (Eyes passim).

The usual suspects — Virgin, Connex, South West Trains, GNER and Great Western — all managed to make bad punctuality records worse. The prospect of investment is not a panacea either. Punctuality deteriorated on some franchises which now have new trains, Anglia worsening by 6 percent and ScotRail by 2 percent.

Where does all this leave the SSRA? Its chief task was to create a strategy to put the railways right; but instead of tackling the industry's flawed structure it has opted to amplify many of the shortcomings through longer franchises. As it processes bids for 20-year franchises it may turn a blind eye to bluebottles in the ointment. After all, the first winning bidder is M40 Trains — chosen to continue running Chiltern Railways just as Chiltern's "all day" punctuality was slumping by 4 percent. The latest figures show just 87.6 percent of trains arriving roughly on time on Chiltern's upgraded and largely exclusive rail system.

The SSRA's refusal to "control and command" could spell trouble for the government, which hyped the SSRA as the solution to passengers' problems (chiefly train delays). The SSRA was presumably meant to turf out Connex and Stagecoach, electoral liabilities in marginal constituencies, from the south central and south western franchises respectively. But the SSRA has alarmingly shortlisted both for the same franchises. Re-awarding of franchises is already slow, and some of the trickiest decisions may be mysteriously postponed until after the general election while the SSRA treads water by publicly spotting "turnarounds" and hinting at "sustained improvement" in existing franchises.

Partial renationalisation is one card the SSRA has up its sleeve. Labour may partially meet its promise of a publicly owned and publicly accountable railway – but only by delivering franchises part-owned by, and accountable to, the public of Sweden, Switzerland, France or Holland.

British firms that privately acknowledge their shortcomings as train operators have formed partnerships with the state rail systems of three of those countries to bid for franchises (Swedish State Railways is bidding alone for Thameslink). This may be politically astute, as anyone who has travelled by train in, say, Switzerland will have been impressed by the quality. Those railways give safety higher priority than Britain's private rail firms and have extensively installed automatic train protection.

But passengers need not hold their breath. Any foreign rail giant which is directly involved will, like its partners, be driven by profits rather than public service in Britain. British passengers will still pay some of the highest fares in the world but a portion of the income from each ticket will go in profit to a state rail company — helping it to keep fares low in its home country. All this simply because the UK government is too spineless to take responsibility for rail performance and safety by resurrecting British Rail.

'Dr B. Ching'

Hard choices

£410,000
total cost per year of introducing and maintaining ATP train braking system (considered by Thames Trains after the Southall train crash in 1997, but rejected before the Paddington train crash in 1999)

£760,000
total salary increases received this year by directors of the Go-Ahead group, which owns Thames Trains (whose trains were involved in both crashes)

DOWN ON THE FARM

THE country's leading paper for farmers carrie the front page banner headline "Boom Time Continue" over a report that "farmers ar experiencing their best period for 20 years according to the ministry of agriculture. At the sam time the country's top business paper proclaim that "Rural economy rules as cities stay in th doldrums", reporting that as prices for sheep an beef cattle hit record levels and dairy exports soa the countryside is enjoying unprecedente prosperity.

You do not need to be a farmer to know that th country in question is not Britain, where farming i going through its worst ever crisis. The place wher agriculture is booming of course is New Zealanc which more than a decade ago took the unthinkable ste of phasing out all farming subsidies.

After an initial rocky patch, the result has been t produce the most successful farming industry in th world, while Britain, after enjoying all the benefits o the European union's common agricultural polic (CAP) for nearly 30 years, faces the prospect of half it surviving farmers giving up or going bankrupt withi the next half decade.

It might be thought there could be no fine testimony to the success of the CAP than the fact tha the EU leads the world in exports of dairy products with a 46 percent share of the world market. Bu analysts are predicting it will soon be overtaken b New Zealand, whose 31 percent share of the worl market is rapidly rising. Yet New Zealand, with a population of three million, spends nothing o subsidies, while the EU, with a population of 37(million, spends £30 billion a year.

It is true New Zealand enjoys certain advantages like a weakish currency and its ready access to fast growing far eastern markets. It is equally true tha British and European farming could never hope t survive if they had to face all the rigours of globa competition without some element of subsidy. But the New Zealanders are still able to ship their unsubsidisec Anchor butter half way round the world and compete with highly subsidised EU farmers to the point where if their exports to the EU were not strictly limited by quota restrictions, they could wipe Kerrygold off the fridge shelf.

It might give pause for thought to those British farmers who imagine they could not possibly hope t survive without the EU's benevolence in handing back a third of the money British taxpayers send to Brussels each year to remember that their New Zealanc counterparts, with no state aid at all, are now having the time of their lives.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

SLIPPED DISC

IT IS often said that the disabled are not sufficiently represented in politics. So hats off to Durham county council, where no fewer than 10 Labour councillors have regularly arrived at meetings at county hall this year in cars bearing "Nil Duty" tax discs.

The discs, says the Benefits Agency, can only be "claimed for a vehicle used solely by, or for the purposes of a disabled person". Nobly, councillors Bill Firby, Harry Douthwaite, Charlie Magee, Albert Nugent, Gordon Tennant, Terry Hogan, Pat Nolan, Pat Curry and Len O'Donnell have all apparently defied their disabilities to serve the public.

Unfortunately misunderstandings sometimes arise. Cllr O'Donnell, for instance, who recently completed a Land's End to John O'Groats charity cycle ride, has now had to shell out £155 for an ordinary tax disc to silence "malicious gossips" who questioned if he was really entitled to use a free disc. Shame.

BUSY, BUSY, BUSY

ONE bright spot in a troubled summer for Lancashire county council's deputy leader Frank McKenna has been his election by councillors to lead the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA).

As *Eye* readers may recall, McKenna is on police bail after being arrested over allegations of irregularities in the 1997 return of general election expenses for West Lancashire MP Colin Pickthall, whose agent he was.

Though the NWRA is little more than a talking shop with a limited planning and regional development role, it could – should Labour win the next election – become an elected body with considerable devolved powers.

Six weeks after McKenna's election in July, the NWRA executive met and recommended that a "special responsibility allowance" (SRA) of £5,000 should be paid to the leader this financial year. Fair enough — McKenna was expected to adopt a "hands on role", spending up to two days a week at the NWRA office in Wigan. And the job would involve "a substantial commitment of time and effort... with the potential for a considerable loss of SRA arising from the leader's own local authority". Except that inquiries to Lancashire council reveal there is as yet no proposal to reduce any of McKenna's "special responsibility" allowances, currently totalling £23,250.

The ambitious McKenna has his heart set on a grand new assembly building on a site currently occupied by a former Roman Catholic training college at Upholland, which commands splendid views over the Douglas valley and its romantic "Fairy Glen".

● **FOUR SEASONS Health Care, which for the last four years has run three of Wandsworth council's homes for the elderly, is taking drastic action to boost profits. Unhappy that the 100 pensioners in its "care" in Wandsworth cost more than £50 a day each to look after, Four Seasons chief executive Hamilton Anstead has been looking for savings. Care assistants, for instance, have been told to cut the number of incontinence pads dished out. And in answer to complaints that first aid boxes in homes were not maintained properly, Anstead told staff they could stock them up themselves. Whether staff will be able to afford to must be in some doubt. Four Seasons has told its 27 care assistants they must show willing and have their hourly pay slashed from £9 to £6 an hour.**

DEPUTY MAYOR CULPA

NERVES are jittery in Doncaster's Mansion House after former deputy mayor Victor Norman Fisher was sent down for nine months by Judge Robert Moore, who told him: "I give you nothing for your attempt to lie your way out of this case."

Four sample charges showed the bent councillor to have had an inventive approach to the standard Donny scam of "adding" days to the beginning and end of local government conferences. Fisher applied to attend conferences and duly put in his expenses but never actually turned up.

At Hull crown court he used the famous "Saunders defence", claiming his failure to remember anything about the conferences he was supposed to have attended was down to the onset of Alzheimer's. This turned out to be self-diagnosed — he said he'd "read a lot of books on the subject". Fellow former councillor Alec Grimson would have attested to Fisher's presence at the conferences, he said, had he not inconsiderately died in the meantime.

Once upon a time Fisher actually opposed the corrupt Doncaster regime. Then favours were done: his father was bumped up the elderly persons' bungalow list and a council job was kept open for his daughter after she was jailed for assaulting a policeman. So Fisher changed sides. But now he has his reward — and a whole clutch of his mates are rapidly reconsidering their "not guilty" pleas.

LOTT ON THE LANDSCAPE

HOW MUCH longer before police collar John Marshall, former deputy head of planning at Restormel council?

It was he who slipped into his office one weekend and "modified" a planning permission so that a factory shopping village could be built instead of warehouses at Roche besides the A30 (*Eye* 1009). The result was that land values shot up – only to fall again when John Prescott rescinded the permission after a public inquiry last year.

Developer Mike "Lotto" Lott demanded compensation from Restormel; and at a judicial review last month Judge George Bartlett QC came up with the intriguing view that the "permission" had been unlawful but could still stand — despite Marshall having admitted to Knacker that he had changed it without authorisation. Lott was granted tens of thousands of pounds in costs.

Restormel, whose legal bill is already nearly half a million pounds, will appeal. But Bartlett's judgment leaves the council open to Lott's claim for the difference in the value of the land unless Knacker acts soon. If Lotto wins it could cost every man woman and child in the borough £1,000.

CARRY ON COUNCILLOR

MICK MOULDING, Britain's least consistent councillor (*Eye* 978), has done it again.

Last year we told how he began his political life as a member of the Labour party, but changed sides and was elected to Preston council as a Lib Dem in May 1998. For six months he was the scourge of the ruling Labour group. Then in January last year he declared himself "a true socialist" and rejoined Labour [*Shome mishtake, shurely? T.B.*] He then became the scourge of the Lib Dems.

The day after the 1999 council elections he quit Labour for a second time and said he was going "Independent". Days later he changed his mind and rejoined the Lib Dems. He then went a year without switching sides, but did manage to have his whole local party suspended for six months after making unsubstantiated allegations of vote-rigging. Last month his Lib Dem colleagues expelled him. He's now thinking of becoming an Independent again...

High Principals

DONCASTER COLLEGE, the first FE institution to feature in High Principals, is in the news again having paid £5,500 in injury compensation to a former lecturer.

As *Eye* readers will recall, back in 1997 college principal Terry Ashurst sacked the NATFHE rep John Giddins. The latest development concerns one of Giddins' staunchest supporters, Lesley Cairns, another union stalwart.

Just before Giddins was sacked, a period when Ashurst had announced plans for compulsory redundancies, Cairns slipped on water spilt on an internal staircase and severely hurt her shoulder. She needed hospital treatment for damaged ligaments, which prevented her from driving or dressing herself for three months. As a point of principle she decided to bring a claim of "injury at work" to highlight that while senior managers were concentrating on sacking staff, they were failing to keep the building safe.

The college denied responsibility and claimed Cairns had brought snow into the building on her shoes and thus the fall was her own fault. However, Cairns had been teaching for three hours before her fall and had not been outside in this time. More conclusively, weather records show that on the day of her accident, 8 January 1997, there was no snow in Doncaster.

At the last hour, in June this year, Doncaster suddenly admitted responsibility and made an out of court settlement. Cairns was dismayed at the contrast with Giddins, who only received £1,800 compensation for unfair dismissal, commenting: "After everything John went through, he'd have been better off falling down the stairs."

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER

THESE TRADITIONAL CHURCH WEDDINGS ARE SO MORIBUND..
BORING FORMAL CLOTHES. TIRED OLD HYMNS. PREDICTABLE READINGS
APPARENTLY THE VICAR'S NOT EVEN GAY!

Letters

Beer and whine

Sir,

Would any of your readership care to join me in a nationwide protest over the prices of beers, wines and spirits? I intend to start a blockade of all breweries and distilleries just as soon as I am able to buy some fuel to get me there.

Needless to say, essential supplies for drinkers such as Liam Gallagher and Robbie Coltrane will be allowed through without intimidation.

It is high time that Mrs Thatcher listened to...

Yours unable to get the tobacco protest off the ground,
P. GARDNER,

Lichfield, Staffs.

Fuel what a scorcher

Sir,

Just when I was getting depressed at the countrywide hysteria re the fuel crisis, the Eye comes up with a vintage issue (1011 – especially Hackwatch & What a Truck Up!) Well done for pointing out the hypocrisy of media and public alike. Reminds me of the famously banned "Diana" issue and similarly worth a year's subscription on its own.

On a similar "mob rule" vane, do you think that the outcome of the GM crops destruction case means that we have a green light (sic) to vandalise petrol stations and car factories on the basis that there is "some risk" that car usage causes around 3,000 deaths per year (including children!), numerous personal injuries, air pollution, global warming etc...?

JD,

Cambridge.

Sir,

Dr B. Ching missed the point about the fuel/lorry problem, as have others.

It seemed to escape him that lorries exist to make profits bringing things to people. Banging on in unfocused articles about supposedly whining, greedy, criminally inclined transport operators gets us nowhere. The solution is how to keep freight moving as it must, in the most efficient and least damaging manner.

Spare rail capacity could only put a tiny dent in road freight. Tracks do not run to supermarket doors and its unreliability, part caused by capacity problems and competition for space with passenger traffics, aside from a notorious history of industrial stoppages, is very poor.

The complexity of many modern warehousing and transport operations would boggle those still in love with a fantasy land where large goods vehicles are sent packing by happy bands of rail men and jolly bargees. The simple point is how to keep the wheels of commerce turning. The solution, in B. Ching's words, is "much more complex".

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES CAWLEY,

Via e-mail.

A lorry driver writes...

Sir,

Just a couple of things I'd like to correct. I am a lorry driver and I resent being called a "trucker", which is an hideous Americanism. I have no idea what is meant by "trucker" in Dr. B. Ching's article on the "fuel crisis". (A driver or a company?)

I can tell you that I have never overloaded a vehicle, taken out a dangerous or faulty vehicle or ever been encouraged to do so. Dr. B. Ching, knowing the transport industry as well as he does, should know that road transport is heavily regulated and that drivers and their employers face heavy fines and imprisonment for breaking the law. The law is rigorously enforced and those who do break it pay the penalties. I trust he keeps a copy of Kroner's to hand at all times.

I was made redundant last year because of "restructuring".

Most big "haulage" companies today are corporations with shareholders (Securicor, Wincanton, BOC, Ryder, as well as the big supermarket chains). I don't recognise the picture painted of a blinkered and unchanging industry.

The cartoon that accompanies this article is crap. I don't know any transport company that pays a basic wage much over £200 per week, which is the UK average. Drivers put in overtime and can earn substantially more, just like anyone else.

As someone in the transport industry, I couldn't give a cat's whisker about fuel prices, but what I do care about is being stereotyped as boneheaded, ignorant, greedy, backstabbing, intimidatory, unprofessional and backward looking.

DENNIS TEARLE,

Basingstoke.

In Clarke's shoes...

Sir,

You suggest in the last issue that my information on military intelligence misdeeds in Northern Ireland is fed to me by the RUC as part of a power struggle with the army.

This is in fact not the case and I hope you will give me the space to put matters straight. The articles were based largely on interviews with a former military intelligence operative who I called Martin Ingram. DI Learner of the Metropolitan police special branch is currently conducting an investigation aimed at finding out who Ingram is and is threatening to charge me with helping him break the official secrets act. Several former military intelligence members have been interviewed and one former soldier, who seems to be Learner's main suspect, is on police bail.

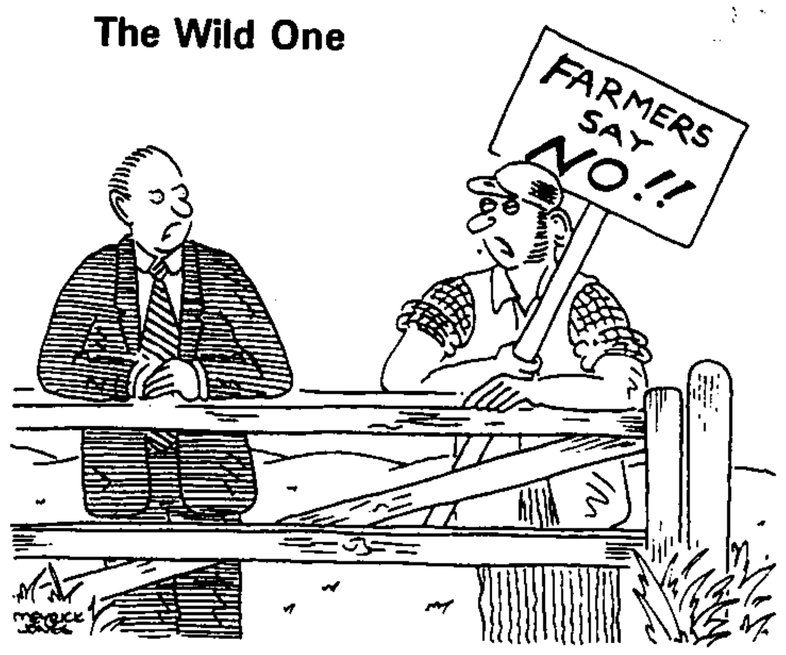
At the same time Sir John Stevens, head of the Met, is conducting an investigation into the murder of Pat Finucane and allegations of collusion between the security forces and terror groups. The Stevens team have taken a statement from the same former soldier as Learner has placed on police bail. They say they regard his information to them as helpful and that he is a potential witness.

So far the RUC haven't come into it, except to get an official complaint from me that my telephone had been tapped and a conversation with a former soldier recorded.

LIAM CLARKE,

Sunday Times.

The Wild One



"Hey, Johnny, what are you rebelling against?"

"What've you got?"

Details, details

Sir,

M.D.'s latest update on the Bristol saga (1011) was an entertaining read as usual. But he was unfair to Hospital Doctor in suggesting there was something inaccurate about our front page taster "James Wisheart talks in detail for the first time". Yes, he has given a handful of brief interviews before. But this time he spent several hours on a number of different occasions talking to one of our journalists. That's what "in detail" means.

I suspect that one reason Mr Wisheart has not talked more freely to the press is the difficulties he has had in getting a fair hearing. M.D. is guilty of this by selectively taking from our article a quote from Mr Wisheart describing how the hospital's results "stuck out like a sore thumb". M.D. suggests this was some admission on Mr Wisheart's part. Not fair. Mr Wisheart's point was that he and his colleagues were cautious in introducing the new procedure - preferring to wait until it had been demonstrated effective elsewhere. Mr Wisheart was actually arguing that, ironically, if his team had been slightly more gung-ho and introduced the procedure before it was proven, their results might well have been similar to other hospitals, rather than sticking out because they followed a couple of years later.

With best wishes,
TIM BURROWES,

Editor, Hospital Doctor.

Baching up the wrong tree

Sir,

In Eye 1010 (Music & Musicians) the picture painted of the current Bach Cantata Pilgrimage was worlds removed from the well-judged and well-researched gems to which readers are accustomed. Such is the cultural philistinism in which we live, not even Sir John Eliot Gardiner would be optimistic enough to try to "convert the world to J.S. Bach". Thankfully, though, this did not keep him from giving over a year of his life to this unique event which has been keenly followed and supported by many people.

The whole point of the cantata pilgrimage was to take this previously-unheard music to outlying places and so your comment that Orkney was "not exactly Edinburgh or Salzburg" seems rather odd as a criticism. I was privileged to hear the performance in Iona and have no doubt that whatever sacrifices were made in order to reach such near perfection were indeed worthwhile. As a professional musician, I have never heard music performed with such dedication and authenticity and cannot imagine ever experiencing anything so moving.

Yours,
JANET THOMSON,

Via e-mail.

Mr A. Murray Threipland and Lady Sophia Herbert
The engagement is announced between Alexander, eldest son of Mr Wyndham Murray Threipland and Mrs Belinda Murray Threipland, and Sophia, eldest daughter of the Earl of Pembroke and Mrs Wyndham Murray Threipland.

Daily Telegraph

I-SPY *Turkey*

Submitted by David Black. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

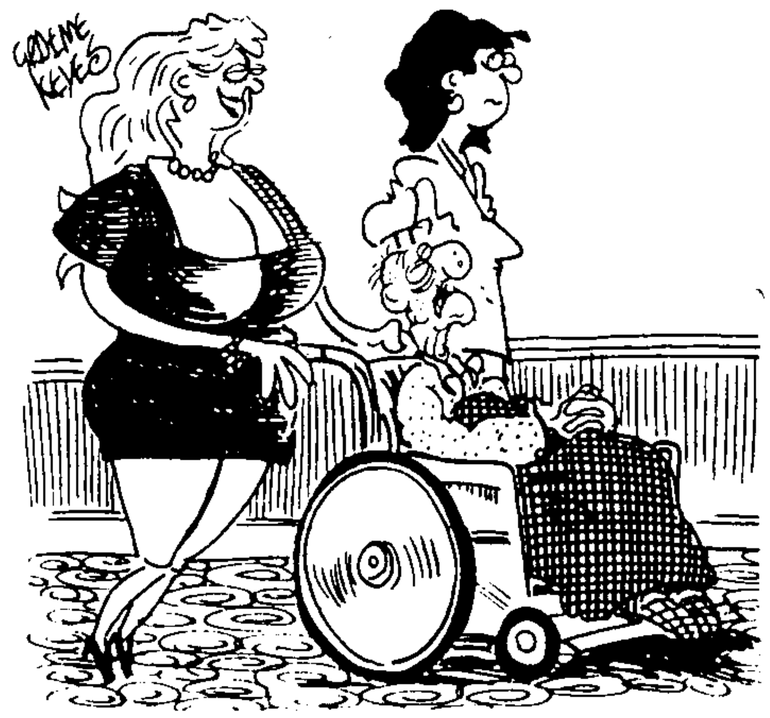
Radio daze

Sir,

The story about Radio 4 rejecting a proposal involving Sir Tom Stoppard (Eye, 22 Sept) wasn't true when it first surfaced in 1997. It isn't true now. It won't be true when you repeat it in the future. The Joseph Heller story is a new one. That isn't true either.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW CASPARI, JANE ELLISON,
CAROLINE RAPHAEL,

Radio 4 Commissioning Editors.



"He's drop dead gorgeous..."

Eating Humberside pie

Sir,

Your article "The Snails of Justice" (Eye, 22 September 2000) is inaccurate with regard to the case of Christopher Alder.

The CPS is ***not*** *"reconsidering its decision not to prosecute five police officers". We advised the investigating force, Humberside Police, in July 1999 that the officers should be charged with misconduct in a public office, a serious offence which can only be heard at crown court and carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. The officers have been charged with this offence and the case is currently going through the courts.*

Yours sincerely,
DAVID CALVERT-SMITH QC,

CPS, London EC4.

Refined vocabulary

Sir,

In Eye 1011, p 11, you pull up the wonderful John Sergeant for describing oil refineries as "distilleries". Maybe he has a deeper understanding of the oil business than you think. After all, oil is distilled in oil refineries to break down the crude oil into usable products. He is, technically speaking, correct.

Yours sincerely,
GARETH SHARMAN,

Bristol.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

Richard Faulds: *I have so much to thank my parents for.*
Interviewer: *Your mum and dad?*
Richard Faulds: *Yes.*
BBC1
(F.A. Connolly)

"She looks like the Olympic record-holder that she is."
D. COLEMAN, BBC1
(Andy Hargreaves)

"England couldn't have expected to win, but they didn't expect to lose."
KAREN BROWN, BBC
(E.R. Carter)

"This is speed, power, grace – use whatever adjective you like about this woman."
STEVE CRAM, BBC
(Derek Watts)

"There you can see her parents. Her father died some time ago."
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC
(Sylvia Crookes)

"She was a born footballer, even when she was young."
Commentator, Eurosport
(Jonny Martin)

"Jonathan Edwards – he has his faith, his health, his family, his children, but more importantly his Olympic medal."
BRIAN ALEXANDER, BBC Radio 5
(Richard Scruton)

"The girls are all very tired, they have had six big events between their legs already."
SALLY GUNNELL, BBC
(Adrian Loveless)

"She's not won a gold medal of any colour, has she?"
JAMES ANDREW, British Eurosport
(Judy Howlett)

"...if she can keep her head and her legs together she shouldn't have too many problems."
Commentator, BBC
(Simon Wolfendale)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

Letter from Lebanon

from Our Own Correspondent

OURS is the land of beaches, mountains and... clichés. Once "war torn" Beirut is still full of "pockmarked" buildings, but it is now "rising, phoenix-like from the ashes". We are entrepreneurs, sophisticates, creators of the "Paris in the East".

It's not true, of course; but who's complaining? Not the powerful. Clichés help cover up corruption and double-talk. Two years ago Sheikh Toufeili, a cleric once loyal to our bearded brothers in the Islamist Hizbollah movement, was public enemy number one, after eight people died in a shoot out he provoked with the army. But now, with no fuss, he's back living quietly at home after a stint across the border with our good friends in Syria.

Best just to pass some of our very fine wine and not to inquire why. Lebanon is a country run by bullies. Some were war-time militia leaders, and most made cash from drugs, guns or laundering money.

They are quick to wave our flag. It has a cedar tree, our national symbol, in the middle, but pretty much all the real trees have long since been cut down. Our rulers claim credit for driving out the Israelis, who left the south of the country in May, although not one risked receiving even a splinter in the fighting, all of which was left to Hizbollah. Dishonesty and bribery are our way of life.

Don't mention that, though. It might put investors off and Standard & Poor, the US credit ratings agency that can make or break an aspiring emerging market such as ourselves, has just downgraded Lebanon because the government has run-up a debt of $22bn (140 percent of GDP). Never mind: the Saudis and Kuwaitis still put plenty of cash into the system and we know they'll keep coming back for more of our imported Russian "dancers", the Casino and the alcohol.

You foreigners seem to be as much in love with this fantasy image of Lebanon as our own big men, and of course the real cliché-mongers are the western reporters. For years we've been polite to adrenaline junkie Robert Fisk, so it's good to see his frustration at today's lack of bloodshed. Fisk was salivating at "exciting weeks" (ie war) when the Israelis were packing their bags, but sadly — for him — the Lebanon/Israeli border is now quiet.

Hence the ego-crazed Fisk reminds readers of your *Independent* of his past glories in a war we'd rather forget. "The highway is resurfaced so that no trace of shrapnel remains," he wrote lately. "Only my memory holds the truth." Really? A fair few of us, we might point out, also bear the scars.

Not that our own media is much better. Take Jamil Mroue, publisher of our ever more pisspoor English-language *Daily Star*, who once famously called his staff "farm animals before me". In Lebanon farm animals make suitable journalists because they just take the scraps they're given. They don't ask questions about Emile Lahoud, our strangely silent president, who seems to spend more time under the sun-ray lamp than speaking to the nation. We are left to draw our own conclusions about the illegal beach-front developments that have cut off the Mediterranean sea from all of us who can't afford to pay high entrance charges.

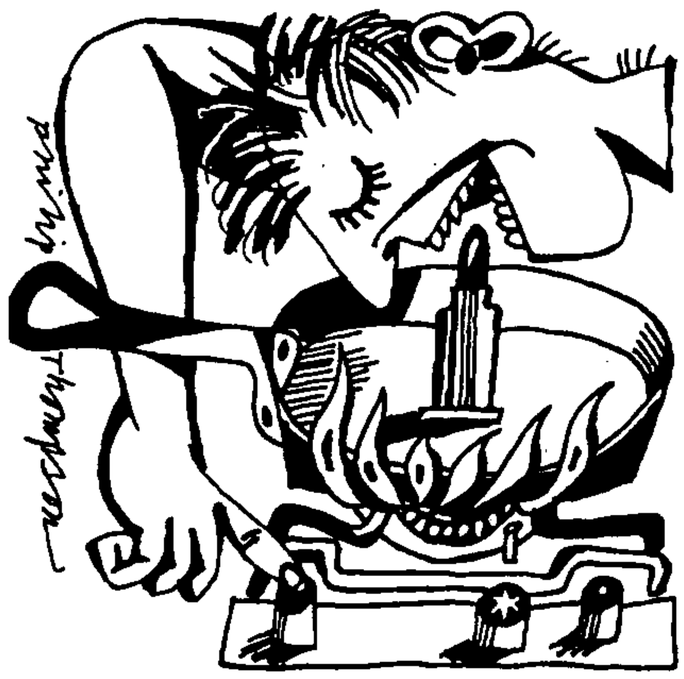
The government assures us that inflation is zero. But back in the real world we know school fees, petrol and food are all getting more expensive. And despite our so-called democracy, no ordinary people can even dream of finding a job without *wasta* — a powerful sponsor.

Everyone in charge, their friends abroad, sometimes even their enemies seem to like things just as they are, pretending that we are well on the way to recovery, despite doing all they can to keep us as divided as ever between Muslims and Christians. It means our feudal lords can cream off the wealth... while Lebanon stays firmly in the past. Pass the wine.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

❍ *"I was depressed," Habil Berenis explained to reporters from his hospital bed in Siauliai, Lithuania, "and had been thinking about suicide for months. I'd been planning to shoot myself with a bullet that I bought from Soviet troops, many years ago, only I didn't have a gun. But last night, while I was drinking, I suddenly realised how to do it. I stood the bullet*



upright in a frying pan, then turned the heat on full, and leaned my head over the stove. Then I shut my eyes and waited for the bullet to explode and kill me.

"It seemed to take a very long time, and I think I must have fallen asleep with my mouth open. Suddenly, I heard a huge bang and felt a pain in my cheek, and I realised the bullet had finally detonated. Doctors say it went in through my open mouth and out through my cheek, leaving a large hole, but it missed my jaw and brain altogether. Apparently, I'm lucky to be alive." (Lietuvos Rytas, 20/8/00. Spotter: B Graham)

— ❍ —

❍ **"My video finally solves one of the greatest riddles of the twentieth century," William Cooper told journalists in Kingman, Arizona. "Who shot JFK? As you will see, it wasn't a sniper but the President's own driver, who turned round and shot the President in the head. And the weapon used was not a pistol. It was a gas pressure device developed by alien beings from the Trilateral Commission."**

Cooper, the leader of the far-right-wing Arizona Militia, then explained why the driver had shot the President. "It was all the work of the Jason Society. That's a society made up of disguised aliens, Jewish bankers, Catholics, lifeguards, golfers, and drug lords, and presided over by Satan. They were plotting to ignite the atmosphere of Jupiter, using a red pepper steam bomb hidden on board the Galileo probe. They were doing this so the earth would then have two suns, just like the planet the aliens had left, and would be ready for invasion.

"But JFK had uncovered their plot, and was about to reveal the truth and foil their scheme. So they silenced him. The Jason Society will ignite Jupiter's atmosphere next year, and they have also sent AIDS to earth to wipe out all the homosexuals, blacks, and Hispanics, because those are the groups that might upset their invasion plans."

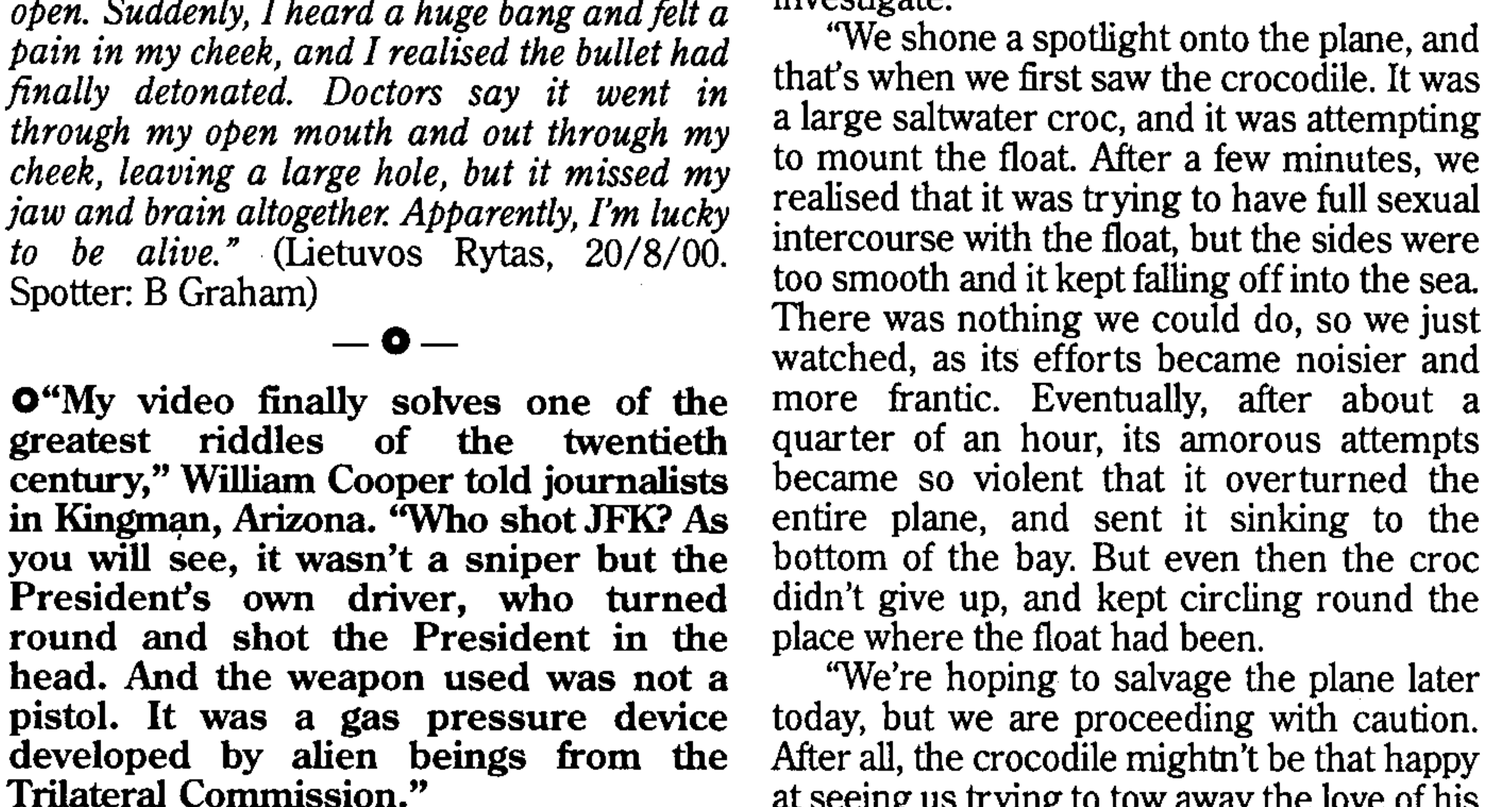
Challenged by one reporter, who said that the JFK assassination video was simply "the Zapruder footage with some very-badly-acted new scenes cut into it," Cooper hastily adjourned the press conference. "Do not listen to members of the Jason Society. Stock up on canned food, and buy an assault rifle. The aliens are coming." *(Daily Mail & Guardian [South Africa], 8/9/00. Spotter: Mark Littlewood)*

— ❍ —

❍ "We moored the seaplane in Princess Charlotte Bay, near Knight Island, just before dusk," Coastguard Rob Harvey told reporters in north Queensland, "and went ashore to camp for the night. About three in the morning, we were awoken by strange noises, so we went down to the shore to investigate.

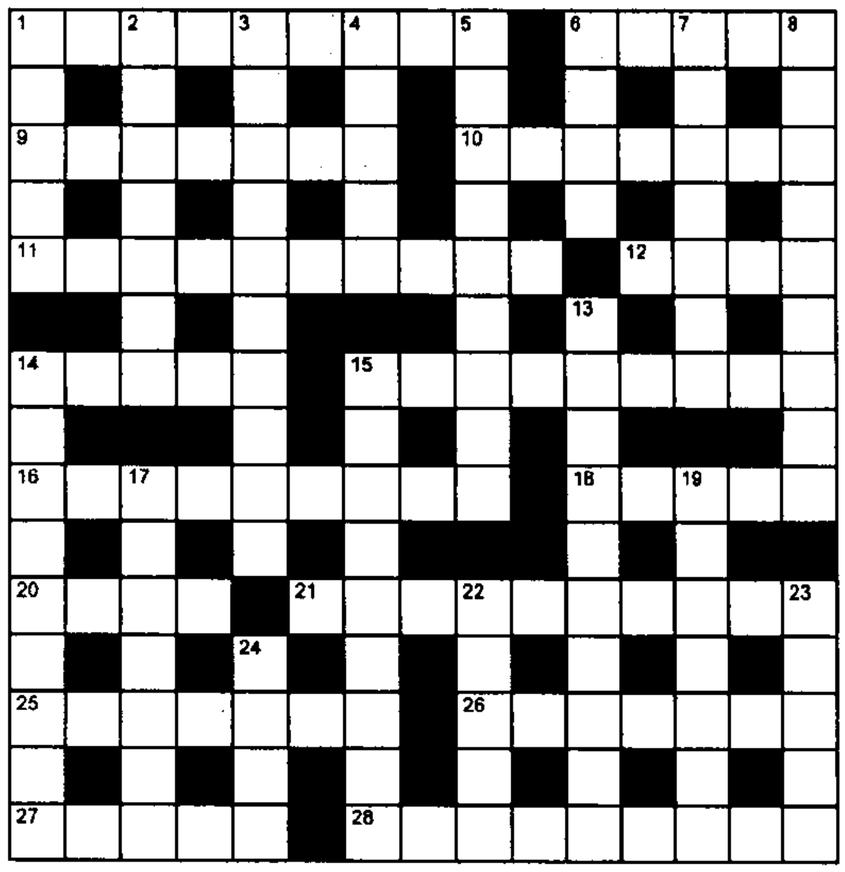
"We shone a spotlight onto the plane, and that's when we first saw the crocodile. It was a large saltwater croc, and it was attempting to mount the float. After a few minutes, we realised that it was trying to have full sexual intercourse with the float, but the sides were too smooth and it kept falling off into the sea. There was nothing we could do, so we just watched, as its efforts became noisier and more frantic. Eventually, after about a quarter of an hour, its amorous attempts became so violent that it overturned the entire plane, and sent it sinking to the bottom of the bay. But even then the croc didn't give up, and kept circling round the place where the float had been.

"We're hoping to salvage the plane later today, but we are proceeding with caution. After all, the crocodile mightn't be that happy at seeing us trying to tow away the love of his life." *(Brother-Sister Magazine [Australia], 20/6/00. Spotter: Norm Reynolds)*



EYE CROSSWORD 167

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 The PM's old bag (9)
6 Blair's first to meet the president's totty (5)
9 Rent out wobbly balls (3,4)
10 Accountant suffering a press invasion is a comfort for Brian (7)
11/25 "Would-be fund-raiser puts ordinary folk second," Tory let slip (3,7,7)
12 Ball-crushing female trainer? (4)
14 Subject to tabloid photo (5)
15 "A grand place for a stiff one," could be, note, usual Mo Mowlam opening (9)
16 Swinger's bit of underwear? (9)
18 City shows interest in spin (5)
20 Boozers chosen by the Poles (4)
21 I march past casually, displaying organ (5,5)
25 See 11
26 'One former politician joins an airline' – just an old Arab story? (3,4)
27 Work hard to clean up Bush (5)
28 Stools making men erect, embarrassed and cross inside (9)

DOWN

1 Writer has info: Hague's last Tory leader (5)
2 Port makes one an idiot (7)
3 Urban know-how way above Conservative cardinal (6,4)
4 In advantageous position, being single and having a hard-on (3,2)
5 Former Blair house has no bearing on where our taxes go (9)
6 Without flipping Mowlam, Blair and Brown initially go down badly (4)
7 Bloody-minded sort creating personal stink — left the girl holding one (7)
8 A respected leader, type of bloke who prefers the US (9)
13 Arse has wrinkle – that's the underlying reality (6,4)
14 Try to slice off balls (9)
15 PM heady, that is irritated, by over-the-top press reports (5,4)
17 Tone's a right naff politician (7)
19 Relentless competition produces a nation of arseholes (3,4)
22 As one spared the supreme sacrifice, is Monica finally over Bill? (5)
23 Centre reveals Hague's extremes are archaic (5)
24 National BSE fiasco engulfs Right (4)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 13.10.00. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

Solution to Crossword No. 166

Winner: M. TAYLOR

ACROSS: 9 Nerdish 10 Implode 11 Falsehood 12 Cilla 13 Big Mac 15 Screw cap 17 XXVIIth Olympiad 20 Bar chart 22 Slogan 24 Camel 25 Anecdotal 27 Panacea 28 Newsman.

DOWN: 1 Snuffbox 2 Oral 3 Literati 4 Shoot 5 Windscale 6 Apache 7 Bollocking 8 Revamp 14 Government 16 Charlatan 18 Meltdown 19 Dangling 20 Biceps 21 H-Block 23 Jeans 26 Time.

PRINCE WILLIAM LASHES OUT IN TRAITOR FURY

by Our Royal Staff **Penny Judas**

IN AN amazing outburst of uncontrolled fury a seething Prince William viciously tore into the author of a controversial new book about his mother by a former aide.

He was asked by Royal reporter Reg Toady of the Mirror: "Would Your Highness care to comment on this disgusting book being serialised by a rival newspaper and would you agree that the author should be condemned to death."

William immediately snapped back, "Thank you all for coming. I shall be giving you details of my gap year in just a minute."

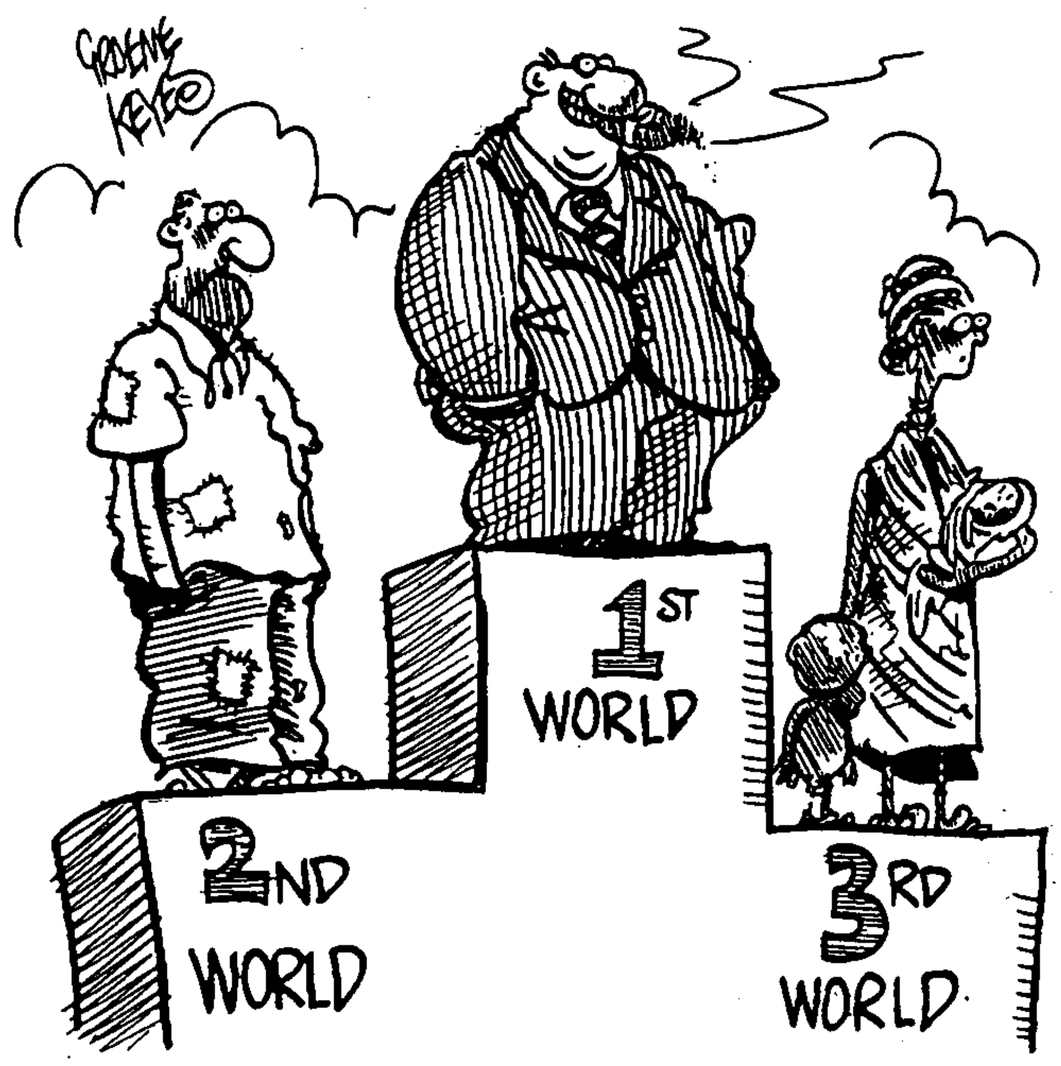
When pressed again on the subject by Julian Lackey of the Telegraph the Prince snarled, "I shall be spending much of my gap year under canvas." This is believed to be a reference to The Hon. Lavinia Canvas, 22, of Bangor.

That Gap Year In Full

1. William to visit Gap on Kings Road to purchase pair of combat trousers.

2. Er...

3. That's it.



CRIMINAL COURT CIRCULAR

The State Funeral of Sir Reginald Kray, Murderer to the Gentry and Knight Commander of the Order of the Diamond Geezer

That procession in full

1ST HEARSE
The late Lord Reginald Kray of Parkhurst GBH.

1ST MINICAB
Lady Roberta Kray, widow of the deceased and lady-in-waiting The Rt. Hon. Nosherina De Vorcee.

1ST STRETCH LIMOUSINE
Dame Barbara Windsor (representing the Queen Victoria pub), Sir Wayne Muscles (Toy-Boy Pursuivant) and smally fluffy dog, Crippen.

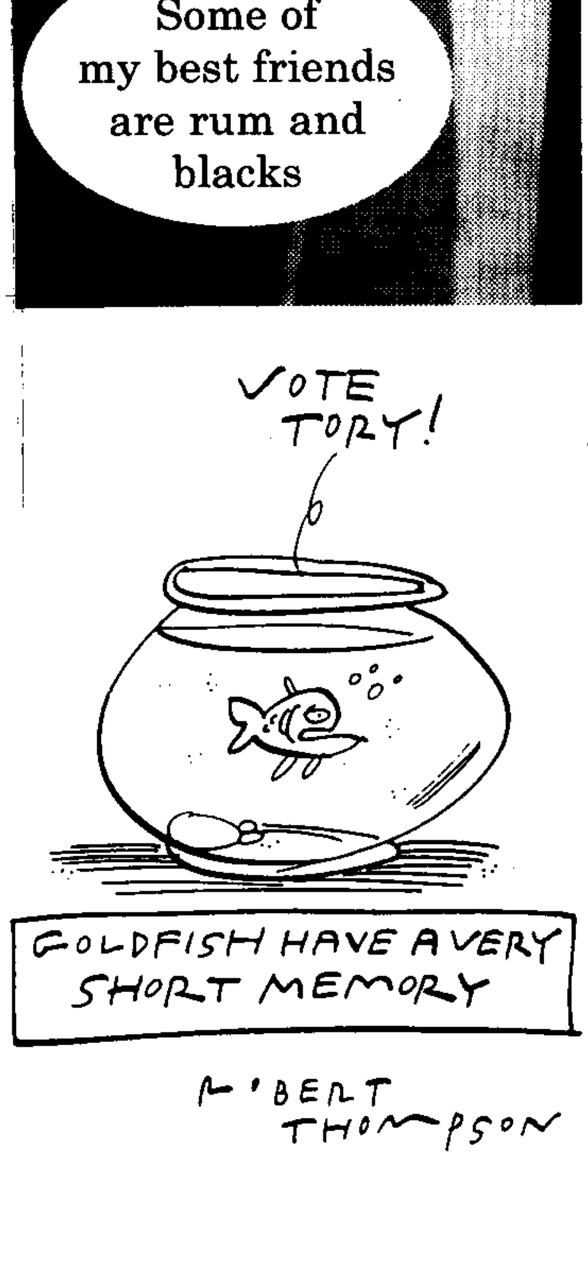
1ST STOLEN CAR
(FORD SIERRA COSWORTH)
Vince "The Hatchet" Gutterini, Dave "Piano Wire" Baird-Smith, Patrick "No Nickname" Maloney.

1ST POLICE CAR
The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Longford, Dame Myra Hindley of the Moors, Inspector "Knacker of the Yard" Knacker.

1ST COACH
Ron "Snapper" Filth (representing the Newspaper Industry), Mr John "Fastbuck" Blake (representing the Publishing Industry), Mr Guy "Madonna's husband" Ritchie (representing the British Gangster Film Industry).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Mr Jack "The Hat" McVitie and various headless corpses buried in shallow graves around the Billericay area.

HAGUE 'NOT RACIST' SHOCK



Traditional Rhymes

No. 94

This little piggy went to market.
This little piggy stayed at home.
This little piggy ate a ham sandwich
And all the other piggies died of Swine Fever.

Advertisement

Human Writs

by Tony Blair (aged 11)

I may not be very clever
But at least I understand
That from today lots of lawyers
Will get rich throughout the land.

For every man and woman
And every toddler too,
Human Rights have arrived,
So let's go out and sue.

If you want lots of money
And you think life's unfair,
Just dial up Matrix Chambers
And ask for Cherie Blair.

© T. Blair.

Issued by the Government in cooperation with the European Union and the Society For The Enrichment of Lawyers.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT. SAFEGUARDING YOUR RIGHTS.

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Special Brighton Outing Edition

Hullo!

And what a marvellous day out we all had in Brighton, despite the best efforts of some troublemakers who wanted to spoil our big day!

We were obviously very grateful to the police for arresting Farmer Haddock before he could make a fool of himself, and for baton-charging Mrs Mortimer and her friends from the St Albion's Hunt.

But otherwise our annual outing was a huge success and everybody was kind enough to say that my sermon on the beach was the best they had ever heard!

What made it particularly special for me was that Cherie and baby Leo were able to be with me, despite some people's prudish objections to Cherie breast-feeding during prayers!

I really would have hoped that in the 21st century we could have a slightly more grown-up and modern attitude to working babies and their mothers!

But of course I wasn't the only person who made our outing such a fantastic success.

Mr Prescott had everyone in fits of laughter with his amusing stand-up

comedy routine at the end of the pier, and we were particularly amused by his hat which read "Kiss Quick Me" and his joke about what he'd like to do to the "stuck-up toffs" who like hunting!

You know, it's amazing that John, who started life as just a humble member of the working classes, is now able to take his place at the very centre of parish life, working under someone like me who has had so many privileges!

Well done, John! We're all very proud of you! And well done also, Mr Brown, our treasurer!

Some people may have thought that when Gordon gave us his little talk, he might have strayed rather too far from the subject of parish finances, which is what he was asked to talk about!

Still, for someone who is not known for his oratorical skills, he made a valiant effort not to be too boring, and the congregation very generously gave him a very supportive standing ovation!

Who says there's no charity at St Albion's!

A friendly word of warning to Gordon's new wife Sarah, however. Next year it might be advisable for her not to try to upstage the other ladies by wearing such a loud red dress! And by the way, Gordon, there's no need for you to copy Mr Gore, the American evangelist, by kissing your wife in public!

Some things really should be done in private, even in this modern 21st century!

But that's enough of me! It's time for my sermon, the edited highlights of which are reprinted here in full in response to overwhelming public demand!

Enjoy!

Tony

The Vicar's Brighton Sermon In Full – Edited Highlights

Confession

Let's face it, we've had a few problems in the parish recently. And it would be dishonest of me not to admit it. The Millennium Tent has not gone quite as well as we hoped. And even though it was nothing to do with me, I'm prepared to accept responsibility for that.

The poor box. 75p for our old people. It's not good enough, is it? Gordon will have to do better.

Absolution

But let's not dwell on the past. We must remember that most of the problems at St Albion's were the fault of my predecessor, the Rev. Major. Let's learn to forgive. So if one or two things have gone wrong in recent months, I forgive you all!

The Creed

I believe passionately in an irreducible core of beliefs. And those beliefs make up my vision. And that vision is what I believe in. It's something I want you all to share. For without a vision, there can be no beliefs. And without belief, there can be no vision.

Commination

Hey, anybody who thinks that young William Hague is fit to be the vicar when he grows up must be as drunk as William is every night down at the youth club.

But seriously. If you want me to be a racist, I just can't do it. If you want me to be a Satanist, then that's just not something I can do. If you want me to be a paedophile and a mass-murderer then, look, you can count me out. Young William is your man.

The Comforting Words

I am listening. I hear. I act as though I care. Be of good faith for I am with you always. Now and for ever.

Peroration

Life is a journey. And also a fight. A fight for what is right. A journey towards what is right. A fight for the right to a journey. A journey to a fight. And, God willing, it is a journey we will win.

Editor's Note: Those of us who were lucky enough to be there will never forget the rapturous applause which greeted these words, as the Vicar stood before us, his face bathed in an unearthly sweat. It was a miracle!

Afterwards we all sang the new chorus which Tony had specially written for everyone to sing:

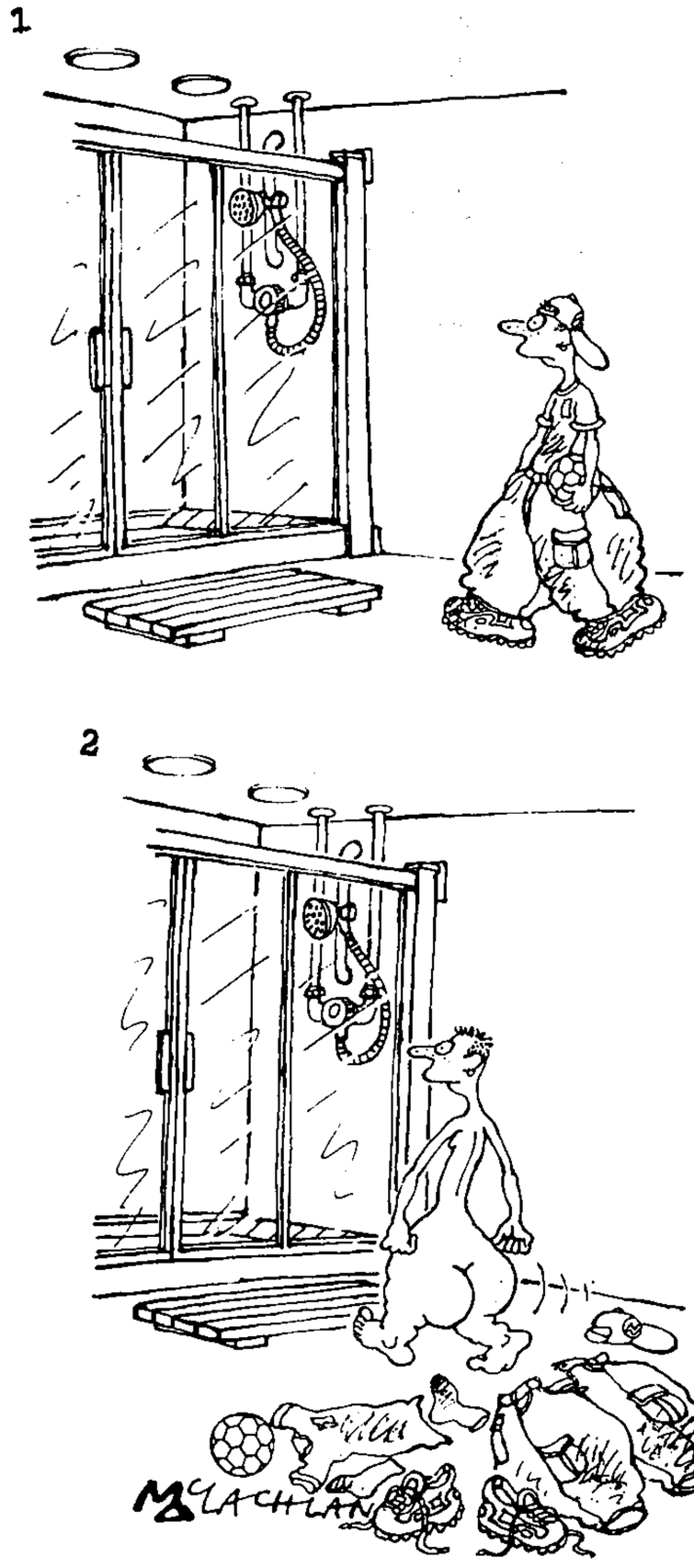
Fight the good fight against the right
The forces of conservatism have been put to flight
Just trust in Tony and you will see
Things will get better eventually.

Words and music T. Blair

We were delighted to welcome as our visiting preacher Rev. Mandela who blessed the Vicar and his good works at St Albion. This shows just what the Vicar meant when he said he would never play the Race card! Well done, Tony, for inviting such a distinguished guest. Next year he hopes to bring an even bigger star, the Reverend Bill Clinton of the Church of the Seven Day Fornicators!

To Remember In Your Prayers

The people of Denmark who have made a very bad decision this week through ignorance, selfishness and their own deliberate fault. Let us pray that their economy collapses, that there is rioting in the streets, that their bacon is infected with swine fever, and that their football team loses all its games. **T.B.**

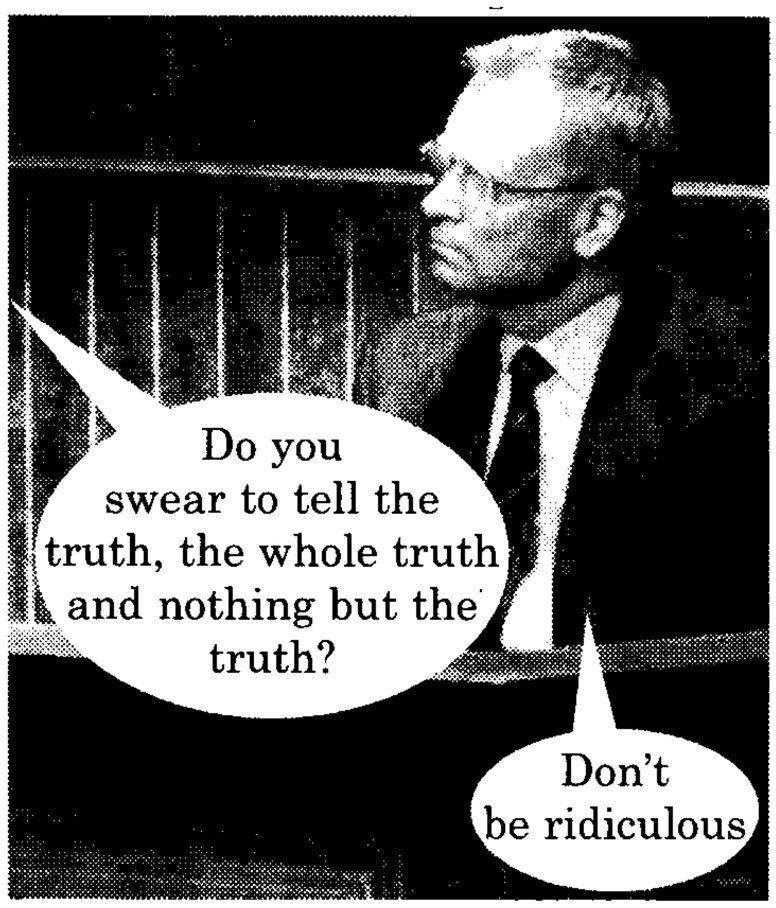


UNDERSTUDY TO TAKE OVER ARCHER ROLE

by Our Theatre Staff **Ned Clinky**

AMIDST widespread calls for the author Jeffrey Archer to pull out as the lead actor in his own play, the millionaire playwright has announced that since he had been charged with perjury it was no longer appropriate for him to play a character who tells lies in court.

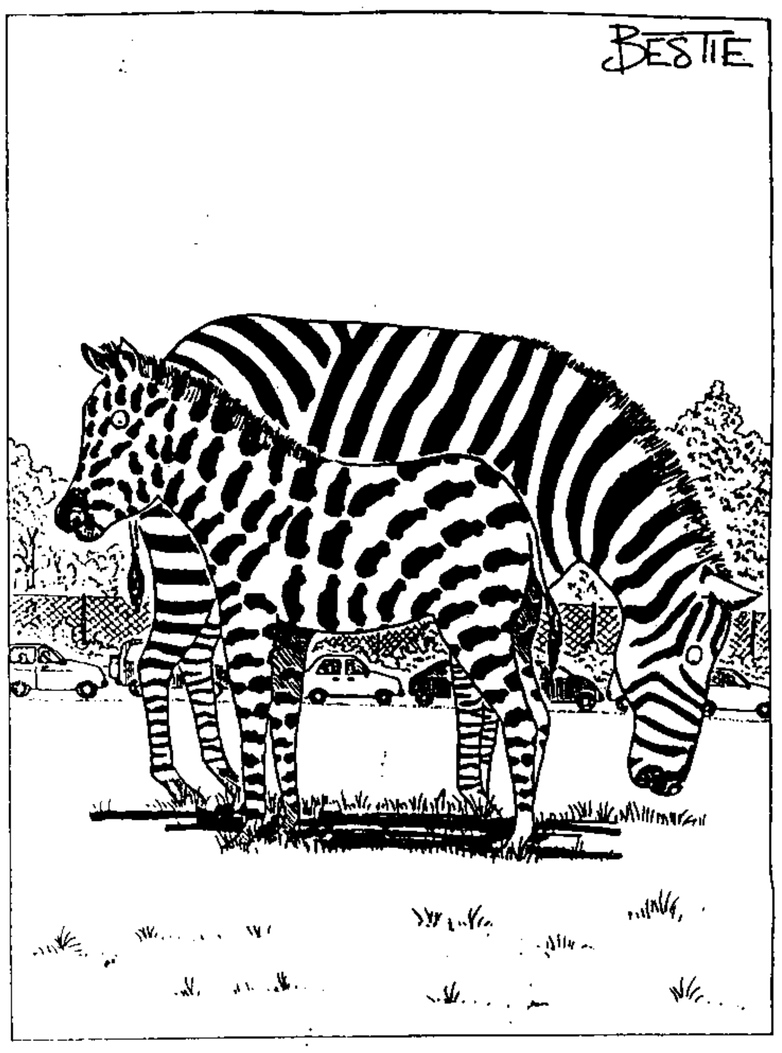
"What the part needs is a proper actor who can memorise large chunks of incredible fiction and deliver it convincingly in front of an audience."



Trial By Perjury

"There is only one performer in this country," said Lord Archer, "who could pull off such a demanding role. And that is Jonathan Aitken."

When contacted at his home last night Mr Aitken denied the entire story. "Jeffrey Archer had made this up," he told reporters. "It is a complete fabrication." Later he issued a denial of his earlier statement. "Jeffrey Aitken is a terrific liar. You can't believe a word he says."



The effects of long-term captivity in the Safari Park were beginning to show

On This Day: 2000

Führer What A Scorcher!

Angry crowds last night made a huge bonfire of thousands of new books about Adolf Hitler. "We've had enough of this poisonous filth," they chanted. "Surely authors have got something else to write about after 60 years of this stuff?" In the picture we see books by Ian Kershaw and Gitta Sereny being thrown on the fire to join all the others that **(cont. p. 94)**

St Albion's Women's Institute News

● Mrs Jay, Matron of the Old People's Home (the Rev. Callaghan's daughter!) gave a most interesting talk on country life. She told us that she knew a lot about the countryside because she had once seen it out of a train window on her way to London.

● Mrs Coote raised the question, "Does the Vicar really take women seriously?" The answer came from the Vicar's secretary, Mrs Anji Hunter, who offered the Vicar's apologies for his absence. "Of course Tony takes women seriously, but you can hardly expect him to come along in person just to listen to a lot of silly women airing their grievances."

✉ Parish Postbag...

Dear Sir,

May I through your columns thank all the parishioners who sent flowers, gifts and messages on my enforced retirement from the PCC. You have all been so kind and generous, and I only wish I could say the same of the vic

Yours gratefully
Mrs Mowlam ("Mo")
The Old Bus Shelter, somewhere on the High Street

The Editor: All letters from Mrs Mowlam may have to be cut for reasons of lunacy, inebriation or other infirmity.

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS — BY BIRCH

I can only work in complete and utter chaos–my studio makes Francis Bacon's look obsessively tidy.
uncluttered white minimalism is essential for me–any hint of disorder stresses me out utterly.
oh, I can work anywhere–my surroundings don't bother me.
Pretentious bastard!

"Remind me to have a serious word with Mr. Sillett over casual dress on a Friday."

Exclusive to all newspapers

CLEVER NOT-BLONDE WOMAN OFF TELLY SPLITS FROM HUSBAND

Space-filling photos of woman in revealing clothes **1, 2, 3, 5, 8-24**

Yugoslavia on knife edge **94**

Yes, He's Back!

Why I Am The Greatest Parliamentary Sketch Writer In The History Of The World

by **Frank Johnson**

Make no mistake. When the history of our civilisation is written, one name above all others will tower over the rest. There is no nobler art than that of parliamentary sketch writing, and it has had no nobler practitioners than myself. It seems incredible *(cont'd. p. 94)*

ARSON-LOVER DEAD

by Our Welsh Poetry Staff
Dai Englishmen

THE world's most famous arson-lover, R.S. Thomas, has died aged 107.

Thomas, a clergyman, was best known for his love of arson, but also wrote poetry in his spare time.

We reprint one of his best-known poems, as a tribute to his life and work:

Cottage, cottage burning bright
In the middle of the night.

Tributes pour in p. 94

BRITAIN WINS OLYMPICS

by Our Sports Staff
Lunchbox O'Booze

IN THE most extraordinary and emotional games of all time, Britain's brave boys and girls took on the entire world and won. *(Are you sure? Ed.)*

In every sport the story was the same. From the Coxless Decathlon to the 400 Metre Volleyball, the plucky Brits faced the planet's best athletes and trounced them.

Amidst scenes of wild jubilation in the Olympic Stadium, the world's foreigners could only look on and marvel as Brit after Brit stepped up to hear the stirring strains of "The Stars and Stripes" (Surely "God Save The Queen"? Ed.) and even the partisan Aussie crowd cheered themselves hoarse as they acknowledged our total supremacy across the sporting board.

As the final tally of medals made crystal clear, Sydney 2000 will go down in history as the British Olympics. The figures speak for themselves:

1st: Britain — 11 Gold Medals

2nd: America — 39 Gold Medals

3rd: Russia — 32 Gold Medals

Last: France — Hardly any at all.

Late News

Top Olympic reporter Mr Lunchbox O'Booze was sent home in disgrace last night after failing a drugs test.

He admitted taking large quantities of a performance-enhancing substance (Vodka). He told IAAF officials, "I took the drug and suddenly the British performance was incredibly enhanced." *(Rotters)*

Delia's How To Cook Up Publicity

Here's a tasty recipe that will really fill up your features pages on a cold autumn day. I call it "Fishy and Chippy".

Instructions

Take one old trout and simmer gently. Add sour grapes and bitter lemon. Then bring to boiling point. Add plenty of chips on shoulder — and for real authenticity serve in copy of old newspaper.

WARNING: This dish may prove hard to swallow and will probably leave a nasty taste in the mouth.

TV Highlights

Big Brother 2

The whole nation fails to be interested at all, as Mel, Nick, Sada and the rest of the Big Brother contestants set themselves the task of remaining famous, but still manage one by one to be evicted from the tabloid press.

Eye Rating: *Bon Voyeur-ge*

HUSBAND
Aye, You want trouble? No problem mate
Come on then...let's Sort it. Lets see 'ow 'ard You are,eh.
Very impressive Nigel. .. Your dinners on the table

Whitstable

The only dampener, apart from the weather, was an incident in which a police officer was shot in the leg with a blank cartridge during a gun safety display.

Daily Telegraph

The Eye Names And Shames

THE DOMOPHILES

Here at last, as a public service, the Eye is proud to identify the guilty men who have been responsible for bringing disgrace on Britain.

Simon Jenkins, 65. Behind his respectable pose as a former Editor of the Times, Jenkins is probably Britain's most dangerous Domophile.

Charles "Charlie" Falconer, 71. Behind his respectable pose as a close friend of Tony Blair's, Falconer is a proven lawyer and has practised Domophilia for several years.

Peter "Mandy" Mandelson, 41. Behind his respectable pose as the country's most powerful homosexual, Mandelson was long the organiser of the country's chief Domophile ring, including Alan Botney, Michael Grade, Lord Rogers and the prime minister himself.

bubble ('bʌb³l) *n.* **1.** a thin film of liquid forming a hollow globule around air or a gas: *a soap bubble*. **2.** a small globule of air or a gas in a liquid or a solid, as in carbonated drinks, glass, etc. **3.** the sound made by a bubbling liquid. **4.** something lacking substance, stability, or seriousness. **5.** an unreliable scheme or enterprise. **6.** a dome, esp. a transparent glass or plastic one.

Collins English Dictionary

An Advertisement From Country Life
October 3rd 1775

Do you want your political landscape changed?

Then why not call in

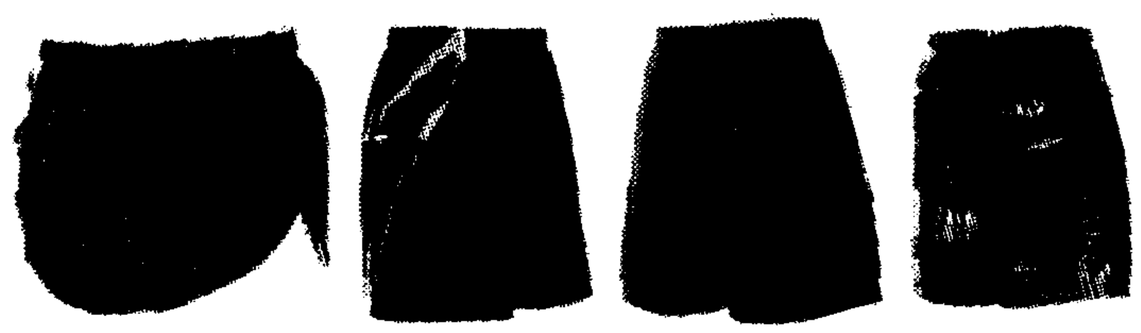
CULPABILITY BROWN

THIS expert designer is responsible for some of the most unpopular views in England.

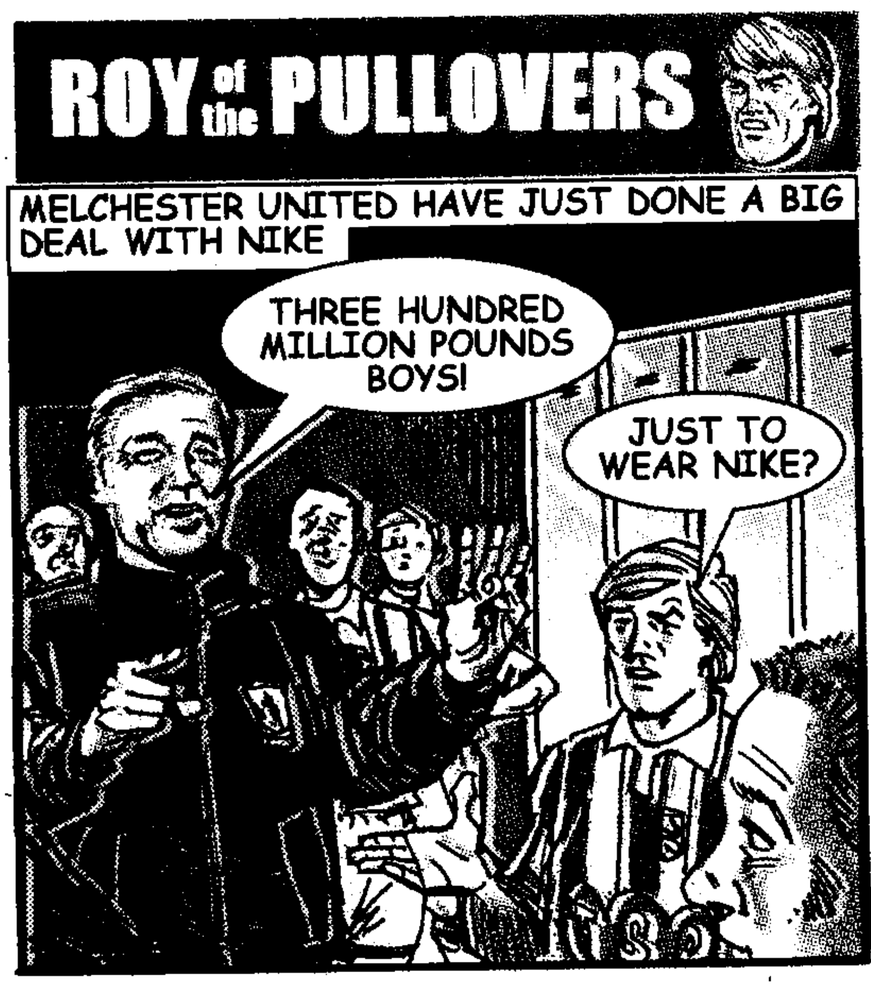
SIMPLY call in "Culpability Brown" and your problems will be started, (Surely "sorted"? Ed.)

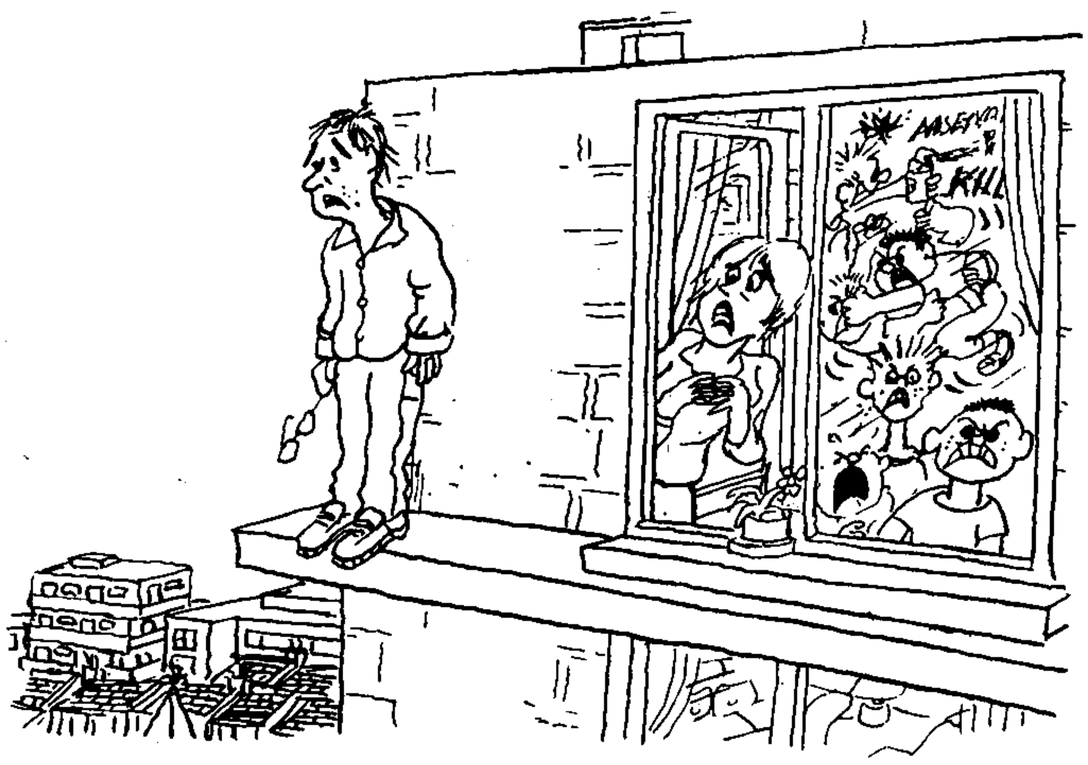
Says one gentleman,* a Mr T.B. of Downing Street, *"Everything in our garden was coming up roses. Then we hired Culpability Brown and he's turned it into a wilderness. Truly, he is an extraordinary talent."

101 Things You Can Mistake For A Paedophile



No. 3. S-paedo swimming trunks


ROY of the PULLOVERS
MELCHESTER UNITED HAVE JUST DONE A BIG DEAL WITH NIKE
THREE HUNDRED MILLION POUNDS BOYS!
JUST TO WEAR NIKE?
THAT SOUNDS A LOT OF MONEY FOR A FEW SHIRTS. WHAT D'YOU THINK DAVE?
DUNNO. POSH BUYS ALL MY CLOTHES
COME ON YOU REDESIGNS!
COOPER



"Think of the children...!"

THE OLYMPICS
An Apology

IN COMMON with all other newspapers, we may have given the mistaken impression that our British Olympic team were a bunch of useless whining geriatrics who could hardly win a goldfish at a fair, let alone a gold medal at Sydney. We suggested that despite being showered with lottery money, they would still embarrass us in front of a worldwide audience of billions.

We now realise that, in the light of our record medal haul, nothing could be further from the truth, and that our triumphant Olympic athletes are nothing less than – "The Bee's Denise", "The King Edwards" and "Sir Redgrave" who, as they were showered with gold, proved themselves to be worthy recipients of every penny of lottery money as they made us proud to be British in front of a worldwide audience of millions.

We apologise for any confusion caused, and any further confusion caused when any of them do fail again at international level we instantly brand them a bunch of useless whining geriatrics pampered with... etc, etc.

"THE BEST BRITISH FILM EVER" Daily Mail

Billy Hague

A touching story of a young Northern boy who defies his Yorkshire roots by becoming a young "Conservative". Shunned by all his friends, young Billy goes to London where he is adopted by a kind old lady with a handbag. She teaches him how to be a Conservative and turns him into a star, until he finally wins the supreme prize by being chosen for the role of leader of the Tory Party.

Billy ..... WAYNE SLEEP
Old Lady ..... DAME MARGARET FONTEYN
Michael Heseltine ..... RUDOLF NUREYEV
Tony Blair ..... LIONEL BLAIR

Eye Rating: *Ballet ridiculous*

Please exercise your write to vote - you have up to eight votes to cast - and return your ballot paper to the Returning Officer by 12 noon on Wednesday, 12th June 2000.

Socialist Educational Ass.

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW

WICKED WILLIES OR PUPPETRY of the PENIS. GOD HELP US!
WHITEHALL THEATRE
NOW SHOWING
BLUE MOON
*!!@
WHEEE!
IN
I SAY! STEADY ON!
LOADS OF LADETTES
DON'T TAKE THE PISS OUT OF OLD PEOPLE THEY'VE GOT BAGS THAT DO THAT FOR THEM! THE QUEEN MOTHER DIDN'T HAVE A FISH-BONE IN HER THROAT.
DON'T ASK
RUDE WARM UP
WOOOOO!
HAS IT COME TO THIS?
SHRIEK!
COMEDY
MANDY KNIGHT
LONE MALE
WOW!
ONCE INSIDE THE FOREPLAY BEGINS....
TWO AUSTRALIANS, TWO DICKS, NO PANTS, WONG THEIR WANGERS INTO AN ARRAY OF SHAPES (SIC)
AND NOW THE LOCH NESS MONSTER
TA-DA!
WANT A HAND?
MORE! MORE!
I THOUGHT IT WAS BUMS ON SEATS, NOT ON STAGE!
I THINK I SHOULD WITHDRAW!
SCREAM! LET IT ALL HANG OUT!
DON'T DO THIS AT HOME LADS
THE INTER-VAL
THE MOST SHOCKING PART OF THE SHOW—
THEY PLAYED RECORDS BY ROLF HARRIS!
TIE ME KANGER-OO DOWN SPORT-WALTZ-ING MATIL-DA
WE'D LIKE SOME VOLUNTEERS FROM THE AUDIENCE PLEASE
MY WHOLE LIFE FLASHED BEFORE ME
WOW!
I'M DYING FOR A PEE!
OH, WELL, THAT'S SEWER BUSINESS!
I SUPPOSE IT'S ALL GOOD CLEAN FILTH!
HEATH

BELGRADE TELEGRAPH
6 October 2000

BLAIROVIC REFUSES TO GO

by Our Political Staff **Bel Grade** *London, Tuesday*

BRITAIN's embattled leader Swetalot Blairovic was last night desperately clinging to power in the face of mass public protest and an emphatic poll verdict calling for him to go.

Old-age pensioners and truckers linked arms and howled for Blairovic to step down and hand over to the opposition (Gordievski Brown).

SERPS

But his long-serving henchman Pyotr Mandelsonofabich told a mass rally of party members (Sid and Boris Blairovich) "Our leader is victorious regardless of what the electorate says."

However, one 190-year-old pensioner, Barbara Castle, disagreed. "It is time for this tyrant to depart. His shirt is stained with the sweat of downtrodden masses."

Blairovic is insisting on a second vote which he feels will give him time to regain the support of his once loyal people.

MILOSEVIC SAYS "I'M LISTENING"

Party leader Slobodan Milosevic today bounced back after his recent difficulties with a rousing conference speech, promising to kill anybody who opposed him. Shots rang out as *(Cont'd. p. 94)*

Dr Thomas Utterfraud

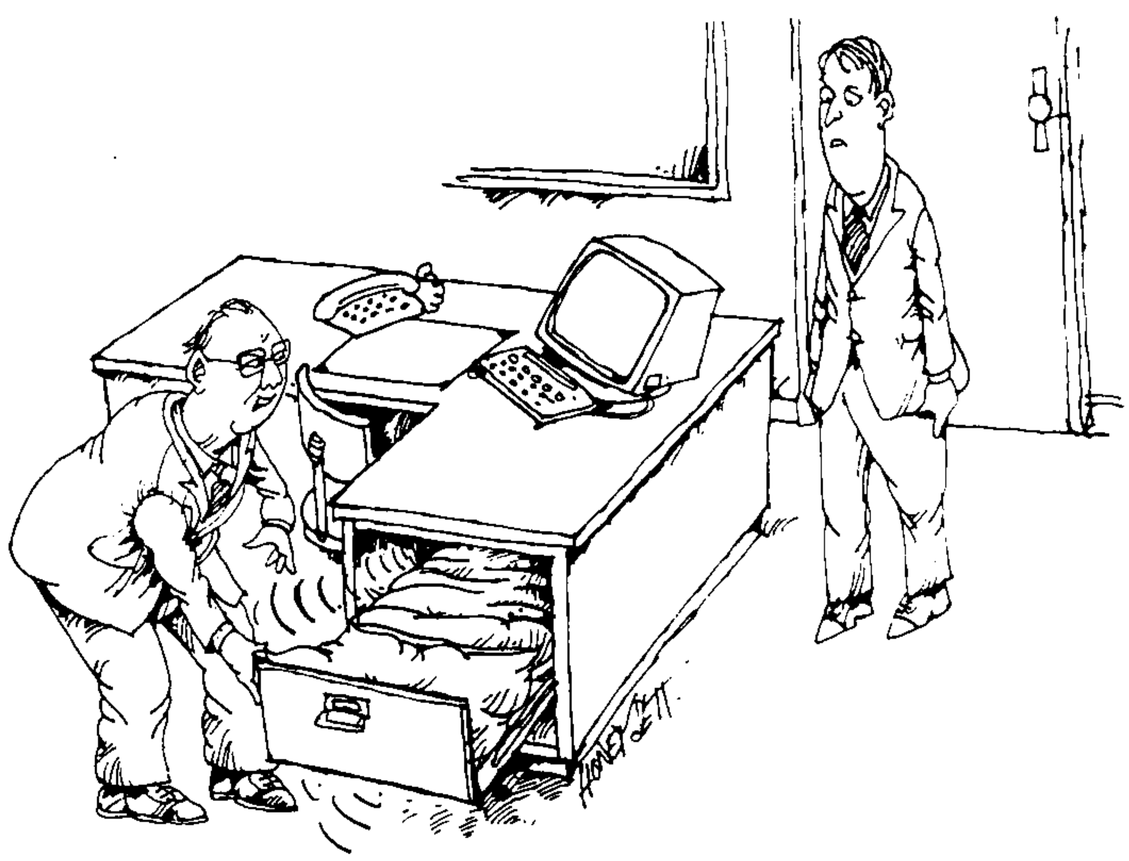
Medical Opinion

As a doctor I am often asked to dash off a quick 1000 words on why people sweat (or Perspirato Nondeodorantensis, as we doctors call it).

The answer is very simple. Sweating is caused by a complete lack of policies, compounded by amnesia and an ability to admit that the Dome is a complete fiasco.

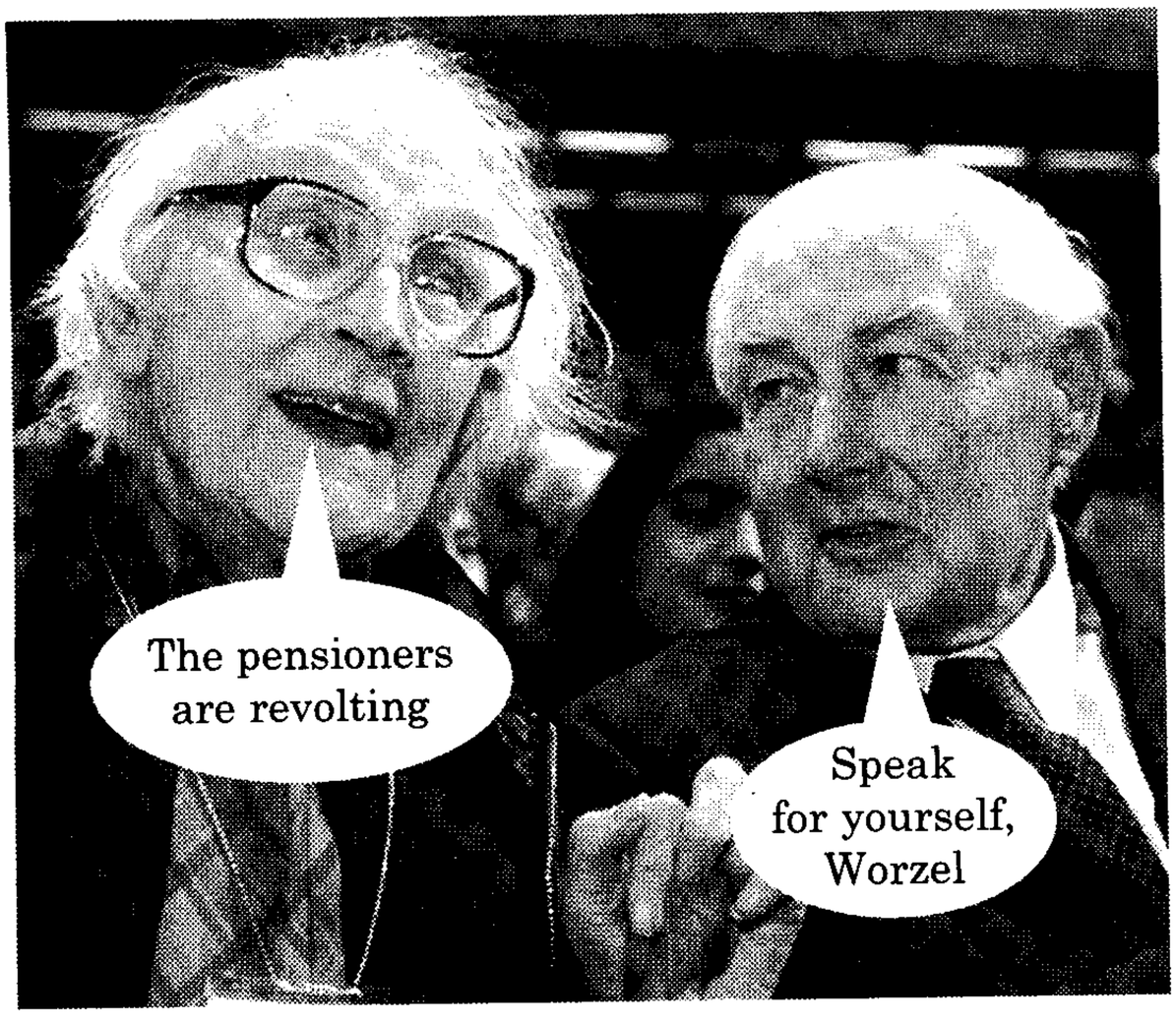
If you are worried about sweating, or that you have fallen behind in the opinion polls, you should consult a spin doctor at once. He will prescribe a change of shirt and your problem will be solved.

© *The Times.*



"As I explained at your interview, the job entails long hours"

LABOUR CONFERENCE



"DEVIOUS AND MANIPULATIVE" Princess Mo Attacked In New Book

by Our Royal Staff **Barbara Windsor Castle**

A NEW book has stripped away the popular legend portraying Princess Mo as a caring, sharing, saintly role model for millions.

In fact, the author maintains the much-loved People's Northern Ireland Secretary was a scheming neurotic, obsessed with her own image, who was rude to her colleagues and flirted indiscriminately with any man she met.

Knee Trimbler

So desperate was she for public attention, that she spent a fortune on clothes bought from such celebrated fashion houses as Sue Ryder and Age Concern.

According to the book, *The Mo Mowlam I Never Knew* by Antony Holden, the late Ms Mowlam was "sex crazy" and lived "in a fantasy world of her own making".

She even once suggested to the prime minister that he should make her foreign secretary, so that she could go round the world spreading peace and love like Mr Cook.

When he refused she threw a tantrum and rang up various journalists to complain that she was being treated "no better than a tea lady".

One Man Went To Bed With Mo

But a Mo loyalist protested last night that it was quite wrong to destroy a much-loved national icon in this way.

"Her children," he fumed, "will be terribly upset, even though she hasn't got any."

Lady Antonia Holden is 69.

"Better make that two *appointments with the hygienist"*

DIARY

WILLIAM HAGUE
•IN BLACKPOOL•

There's no two ways about it. Labour is seriously rattled. Phony Tony – to the uninitiated that's Mr Tony Blair, our so-called Prime Minister! – is no longer the People's Choice. And our private polls suggest my personal popularity is riding at an all-time high, with no fewer than six people in fifty believing yours truly would do either a better job than the present incumbent or no worse. I am proud to have been to a comprehensive school in Rotherham, where they taught us to bide our time. Yes, after three and a half years in the wilderness we're on our way back.

To celebrate, I treated my wife Ffion to a three-course meal, half a bottle of wine (red or white) and coffee included. Our conversation covered a wide range of topics, from my recollections of hailing from a comprehensive school in Rotherham, to a brief word about the imminent expansion of my personal collection of novelty cufflinks(!) to the rather more serious matter of developing an economic policy to drag us kicking and screaming into the 21st century.

I regard Ffion as not only my wife but also my best friend not counting Seb Coe. Consequently, I welcomed her input into our two-way discussion. After a fruit-based sweet, no cream, I broadened the conversational agenda to the world economy. "What about the bill?" Ffion said.

"Good question," I congratulated her. "The IMF can't go on bailing out the Third World willy-nilly."

"Bill!" she said.

"Ffion!" I replied, then I dipped into my briefcase and brought out the latest set of figures for ward closures under "New" Labour. A most fruitful evening, to be sure.

Cufflinks update... cufflinks update... cufflinks update...

Among my collection of over 85 novelty cufflinks is a pair in 18 carat gold inscribed – "Toe Knee (bl)Hair" – an amusing reference to the Prime Minister, a timely reminder that, like the rest of us, he's only human!!

The British are a truly great people.

Our home is our castle. Our word is our bond. We look before we leap. And we know where we stand.

Nothing can come between us and a truly refreshing pint of best bitter on a warm summer's evening. Mmmm. Lovely. That's what I learned at my comprehensive school in Rotherham.

And so this I say to you.

Somebody has to call a halt to Brussels. Someone must have the courage to say, ***"Hang on! This isn't the British Way of Doing Things!"***

When British sausage manufacturers are instructed by Brussels diktat that they can no longer include a fair dollop of good old British nostril in their great British bangers – someone must have the courage to say, ***"Hang on! This isn't the British Way of Doing Things!"***

When ordinary, decent British lorrydrivers – the backbone of this country's transport infrastructure, bless 'em – are instructed by Brussels diktat to obey safety standards – someone must have the courage to say, ***"Hang on! This isn't the British Way of Doing Things!"***

And when the elderly and the infirm in our great British countryside are forbidden by Brussels diktat from arming themselves with trusty British shotguns and protecting the rule of law by shooting passing scroungers playing offensive music at full volume without any thought for other people – someone must have the courage to say, ***"Hang on! This isn't the British Way of Doing Things!"***

And so I tell you this. I am a normal Briton. Yes, I like a jar or two. Yes, I enjoy a bit of gardening out the back if it's not a day for racing the old whippets – but nothing too strenuous, mind! And yes, I like to stand on the terraces and shout my support for the local soccer team – and yes, I'm as disappointed as the next bloke if they're bowled out for a googly. That's the way the world looks if, like me, you come from a comprehensive school in Rotherham.

So I am ready to accept that challenge on your behalf. I am ready to stand up to the Brussels bureaucrats and say, loud and clear, "Sorry, mate – but we love the good honest crunch of birds beak in our great British banger. And yes – we're prepared to fight you to the death for our right to consume it."

Cufflinks update... cufflinks update... cufflinks update...

When I visited the US of A on a fact-finding mission last year, Governor Jeb Bush was good enough to spare me five minutes from his busy schedule for a one-to-one meeting. It was so stimulating the Governor allowed it to overrun a good thirty seconds. "Hey! Great cufflinks!" the Governor said, while I was filling him in, with the aid of bar-charts, on the problems of Welsh devolution. I gathered straightaway that he was referring to my cufflinks. "They're in the shape of two sausages and they say 'Save Our Great British Banger'!" I told him with a chuckle, adding "There can be tremendous value in a sense of humour – as I had ample cause to learn at my comprehensive school in Rotherham!" Whereupon he thanked me for my advice, and graciously apologised for hurrying me off, explaining he was already late for lunch with the Junior Finance Minister of Venezuela.

Cufflinks update... cufflinks update... cufflinks update...

There's nothing the British people like more than a good cufflink. I myself went to a comprehensive school in Rotherham, where I learnt how much Britons value their cufflinks. The British people, throughout our long history, have always, through good fortune and courage, been able to choose their own cufflinks.

The Conservative Party conference is a great place for renewing the acquaintance of old friends. And quite a few young ones too. Contrary to media tittle-tattle, a great many Conservatives at Blackpool are under the age of 73, and for these young tearaways, full of energy and enthusiasm, we have specially asked Sir Jimmy Savile to present An Evening With Mr Acker Bilk. Noisy? Possibly. Irresponsible? Probably. Fun? Definitely! So why not come along and even – hey! – shake a cufflink or two for the future of British Conservatism?

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER

NO WAY WOULD I HAVE A CHAUFFEUR!
A CHAUFFEUR IS ELITIST, SHOWY AND PRETENTIOUS, MATE..
IT'S TOTALLY FOREIGN TO ME..
I HAVE A DRIVER. AND YOU CAN QUOTE ME ON THAT..
OH RIGHT.

Literary Review

Dribs and Drabble

The Oxford Companion to English Literature

Margaret Drabble, Ed

(OUP, £25)

TO mark publication of her latest — and last — recension of the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, inaugurated by Sir Paul Harvey as long ago as 1932, Margaret Drabble produced a curiously disobliging piece for the *Sunday Times*. Its gist was that la Drab was fed up to the back teeth with the band of letter-writers who presumed to address her about the book's contents and delighted "to say goodbye to my old companion and to all those correspondents who have written to me at times so intemperately over the years".

Bequeathing the project to a hapless incoming drudge named Daniel Hahn, Mags went so far as to pen an "alternative" reply to these hordes of querulous point-raisers: "Dear Sir. You are a double-dyed Cornish/Welsh/philosophical/Shakespearean/sexist/feminist hypocrite, and you are not at all sorry to have discovered what you take to be a mistake or an omission. You are delighted." Corrigenda are only OK, you see, "when they are offered in the right spirit".

You get the idea? You spend years compiling — well, let's be honest, getting other people to compile under your hawk-eyed superintendence — one of these bloody Oxford doorstoppers, and then the peasants out there have the temerity to complain! And all the while, your bloody sister is scooping the Booker Prize and a DBE. Is it any wonder you get all hoity-toity about it?

As for the book itself, on which Ms Drabble and her chums — persons such as John Carey, Salman Rushdie and the absolutely ubiquitous John Sutherland — have laboured for so long, well, it's the usual ragbag of wide-eyed modishness.

Morrison, (Philip) Blake (b. 1950) gets more space than his namesake Arthur (1863-1945), author of two of the finest late-Victorian novels on the block, and there are po-faced entries for items such as "Lad Literature", the "brat-pack" and other momentary fads. No doubt Ms D has yet to catch up with chick-fic, or we could have revelled in some crisply authoritative encomia to Wendy Holden, Lisa Jewell and Co.

What distinguishes the Drabble version, oddly enough, is the idleness of the animating spirit, the sterling resolve to let loose ends stay untied. Obviously people with nothing better to do will always argue over the exclusions — and to turn all highbrow for a moment, I really can't see why if Kate Atkinson and Nick Hornby are included the net shouldn't stretch as far as J.K. Rowling — but why is it, for example, that whereas certain writers' careers are taken right up to the 1999 cut-off point, various others are allowed to languish a decade or so behind?

Thus la Drab registers that J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* won the 1999 Booker Prize, but cuts off Timothy Mo's career in 1991; takes Julian Barnes' *oeuvre* up to 1998 but misses the last two books by David Lodge.

Having read the strictures in the *Sunday Times*, I wouldn't dream of correcting the various errors I picked up along the way. What is worth wondering, though, is why Ms Drabble, that quintessence of industry and application, wanted to devote two decades of her life to the thankless task of chasing celebrity contributors and fuming over pedantic letters from the great unwashed. The answer, oddly enough, would seem to be that her tenure at the volume's masthead runs more or less in parallel with the decline of her powers as a novelist.

Drabble the writer, having cleaned up in the 60s and 70s — check out *The Millstone* (1965), whose date, amusingly enough, the *Companion* actually gets a year askew, or *Jerusalem The Golden* (1968) for examples of when she could really cut it — began to go off the boil at around the time of *The Middle Ground* (1980). No doubt these years of labour on the OUP's behalf have offered some kind of compensation, but why the snootiness? Jobs like this have to be done. Ordinary readers who fork out £25 for a supposedly authoritative guide to our national literature are entitled to have an opinion on it rather than to be greeted by these freezing blasts of Hampstead hauteur. Just as well my copy of Sir Paul Harvey's earlier effort is still on the shelf.

NEW GRUB STREET

AND so, as Salman Rushdie prepares to quit these shores for the embrace of Manhattan and its deferential cultural fixers, the chief culprit turns out to be the "bitchiness" of literary London. With the argument between our man and his detractors continuing almost up to the airport departure gates (see the withering exchange with Yasmin Alibhai-Brown in last week's *Independent*) the usual gallons of ink have been expended in trying to determine whether the old boy has a point. "How spiteful is the London literary world?" John Sutherland wondered in his *Guardian* column. "Or is it just that writers as successful and talented as Salman bring out the worst in Grub Street and its venal hacks?"

One point that ought immediately to be made is that among that tribe of young British novelists that sprang to prominence in the 1980s, no one — not Mart, not Julian, not Ian McEwan — had a rosier press than Salman Rushdie in his pomp. A critics' darling before the 1988 fatwa on *The Satanic Verses*, he then had to endure the terrible cross of having his books praised for non-literary reasons. Give a bad review to someone living in fear of his life? Thanks all the same, but I think I'll pass on this one.

In fact the conspiracy of silence over Rushdie's *longueurs*, Rushdie's trademark crossness if anyone pointed them out, and the continual round of favours doled out by well-placed chums (for example the *Observer* stifling a bad review of *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*) endured for much longer than the author had a right to expect.

'Jasper Milvain'

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ GEORGE CARMAN, the World's Wealthiest Barrister, is about to become even wealthier: he is writing his memoirs.

As a novice at the literary game, Carman consulted two of London's top agents — Ed Victor and Gillon Aitken — on how best to screw money out of publishers. Licking their lips at the prospect of recruiting another lucrative client from whom they could earn a 15 percent commission, both men happily gave him the benefit of their wisdom.

But the canny Carman had other ideas. Having learned the tricks of the trade from Victor and Aitken, he toddled off to HarperCollins and negotiated an advance of £500,000 on his own behalf — thus saving himself £75,000 in agents' fees.

■ CONSTERNATION at the *Sunday Times*, where the serialisation of Patrick Jephson's much-hyped royal memoir was greeted with a collective yawn from readers.

The Dirty Digger may be none too pleased when he learns how much *ST* editor John Witherow paid for the rights to Jephson's dreary witterings about Charles and Diana: £400,000.

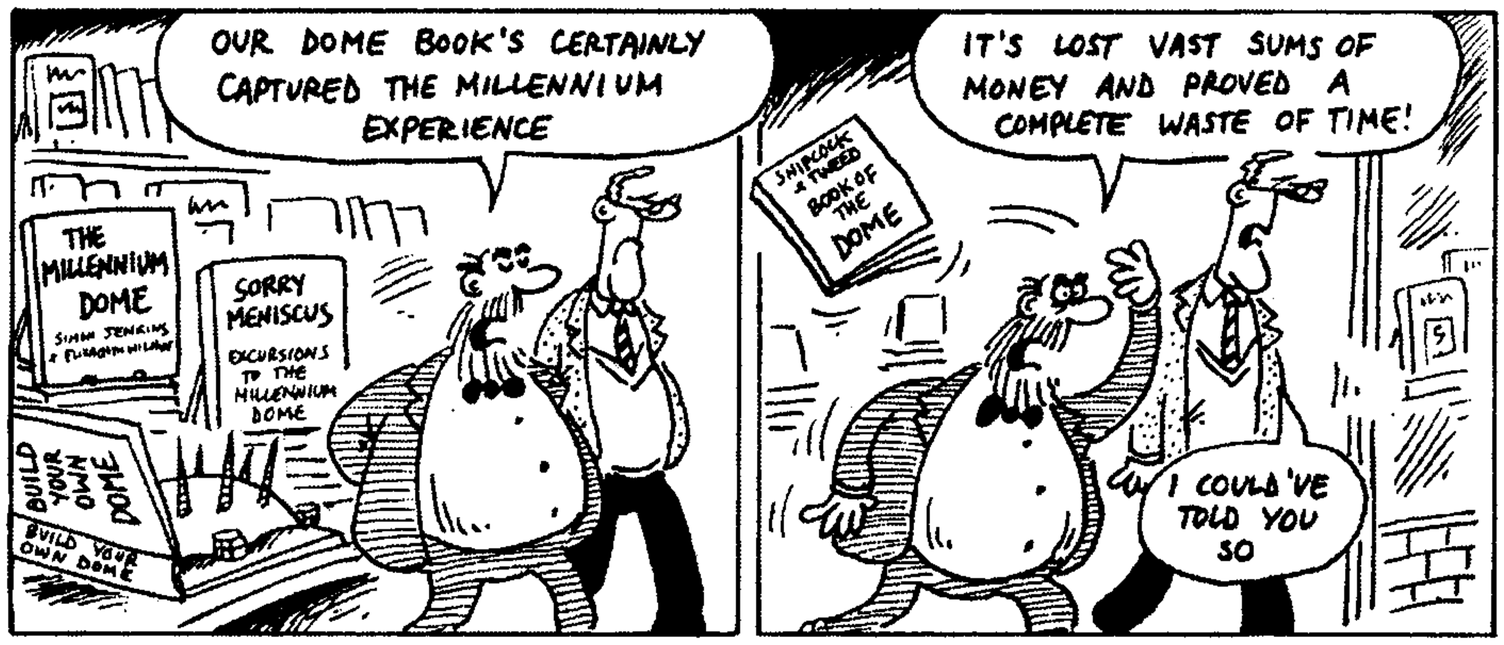
■ CASHFLOW is in a parlous state at Waterstone's, with publishers ringing HMV Media chief exec Alan "Weasel" Giles and demanding the increasingly large amounts that they are owed for books supplied.

One such apoplectic call came from Random House chief executive "Sir" Gail Rebuck, asking for the £2m that the publisher was owed as at the end of August. Still piqued that the publisher's parent company Bertelsmann valued Waterstone's at just £220m when it put in an offer in the spring, the Weasel instructed Waterstone's md David "Mekon" Kneale and finance director Andrew Humphrey to pay Random House just £450,000 of the amount owed, with the rest to follow later. Net result: the Weasel buys himself some time and Bertelsmann learns not to annoy one of its biggest customers. Flushed with the success of his stratagem, the Weasel is now likely to try it on with other publishers.

■ HAVING alluded to Naim Atallah-Disgusting's breathtakingly successful stewardship of Aspreys the jewellers in *Eye* 1008, Bookworm is delighted to note that he appears to be applying the same sureness of touch to his publishing ventures.

His distribution company Pipeline Books is all but defunct, and his publishing house Quartet is now a nearly a year late filing its 1999 accounts, which is never a good sign. The 1998 figures show a pre-tax loss of £46,000, Quartet having not turned a profit for several years. In addition the company has an unsatisfied county court judgment for £53,347 against its name, indicating that it hasn't been too assiduous in settling its bills. Meanwhile Namara Ltd – the holding company for all of Atallah-Disgusting's operations — has a similar record of dire losses and CCJs, and was recently the subject of a petition for a compulsory winding-up order. This is thought to have been finally staved off by hollow promises that a trust run by the Atallah-Disgusting family would see that all was well in the end. How much longer can the Namara empire carry on in this manner?

'Bookworm'


OUR DOME BOOK'S CERTAINLY CAPTURED THE MILLENNIUM EXPERIENCE
THE MILLENNIUM DOME
SIMM JENKINS & FURGUS HILLARY
SORRY MENISCUS
EXCURSIONS TO THE MILLENNIUM DOME
BUILD YOUR OWN DOME
BUILD YOUR OWN DOME
IT'S LOST VAST SUMS OF MONEY AND PROVED A COMPLETE WASTE OF TIME!
SNIPCOCK & TWEED BOOK OF THE DOME
I COULD'VE TOLD YOU SO

IN THE BACK

MARSHALL LAW

SIXTEEN years ago, before it was privatised, British Airways set up a new pension scheme for its workers.

Colin Marshall, then BA chief executive, reassured pensioners with a clear commitment. "These are not in any way rival schemes," he wrote on the front page of the British Airways house journal. "They will of course be legally independent, and I can promise you that neither is going to subsidise the other."

The words to remember are "of course" and "promise". For under the chairmanship of the same Colin (now Lord) Marshall, and in defiance of the declared wishes of its pensioners, BA is proposing to merge the two legally independent pension schemes so that one can subsidise the other.

So secure and generous was the pension scheme under public ownership that BA's City backers refused to contemplate privatisation unless the scheme was replaced. So the old airways pension scheme (APS) was replaced by a new airways pension scheme (NAPS).

Members of the old scheme continued to enjoy the security and benefits of the old scheme. To tempt members of the old scheme into the new one, the trustees offered a juicy bribe averaging £4,900 — £15,000 for a pilot — but thousands of APS members were shrewd enough to turn the bribe down and stay in the old scheme.

By last year in the old scheme there were roughly 5,000 active (that is, still employed) APS members, 32,000 pensioners and £6bn. In the new one there were 41,500 active NAPS members, 23,000 pensioners and £3bn. The old scheme had accumulated a huge surplus — actuarially valued at £993m, but at market value worth well in excess of £1bn. So British Airways had not paid a penny into it for years.

By contrast the new scheme had run into a deficit, and BA has to pay some £90m a year into it. The advantages for BA in merging the schemes are thus fairly obvious. It would be able to use the surplus on the old scheme to subsidise the new one. In general, the huge surplus on the old fund, which could and should be used to raise benefits and provide long-term security for pensioners, would be used instead to bolster the dwindling fortunes of BA.

The announcement by the trustees (who are the same for both funds, as is their chairman Derek Stevens, finance director of BA) that the funds will be merged was made in July last year, and might well have gone ahead in an atmosphere of general apathy and ignorance. Unluckily for BA, the merger proposal was studied very carefully by a British Airways pilot captain called Mike Post.

Mr Post discovered, among other things, that the same firm of actuaries — Watson Wyatt - was advising BA and the trustees of both pension schemes, and was recommending the merger. Rather different advice was given to BA pensioners by an independent firm of actuaries, Barnett Waddingham. It pointed out that if the merger proposal went ahead "several hundred millions of APS monies would be allocated from benefit security and improvements under APS to the employer". In plain language of a type not normally used by actuaries, the huge surplus under the old scheme was going to be swiped by BA for its own purposes.

Mr Post also discovered that if he collected the signatures of 50 active members of APS he could call a meeting. In a couple of days he gathered 100. On 19 August last year, 800 people flocked to a meeting in a Heathrow hangar. In his speech on that occasion, Mike Post pointed out the differences between the two pension schemes. He singled out clause 18 of the trust deed of the old scheme which insisted: "No changes or additions to the rules can be made which would result in the return to an employer of their contributions or part thereof." There was, he pointed out, no such security in the new scheme.

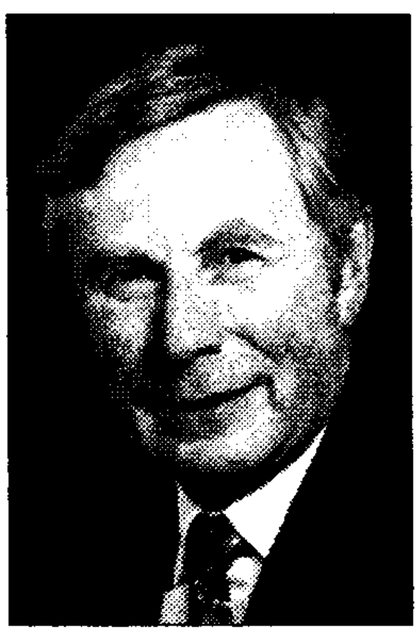
On a show of hands 93 percent voted against the merger. Two days later, another meeting was called at the spanking new BA Waterside building at Heathrow. Fifteen hundred people turned up this time and on another show of hands, only seven voted in favour of the merger.

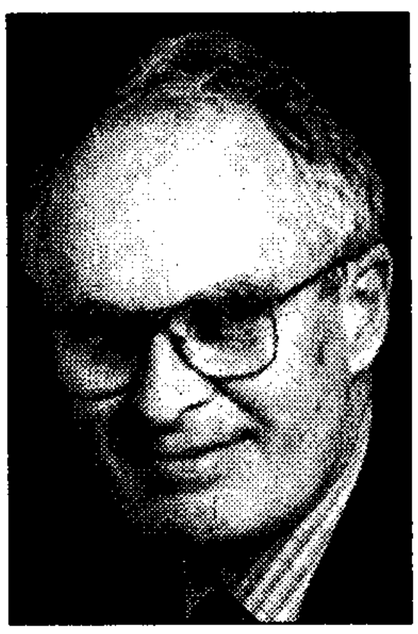
In November last year, in a postal ballot, to which 78.2 percent responded, 276 active (employed) members of APS (7 percent) voted in favour of the merger, 3,620 (93 percent) against. In a second ballot of all APS beneficiaries, 4,945 (21 percent) voted in favour of the merger, 18,070 (78.5 percent) against.

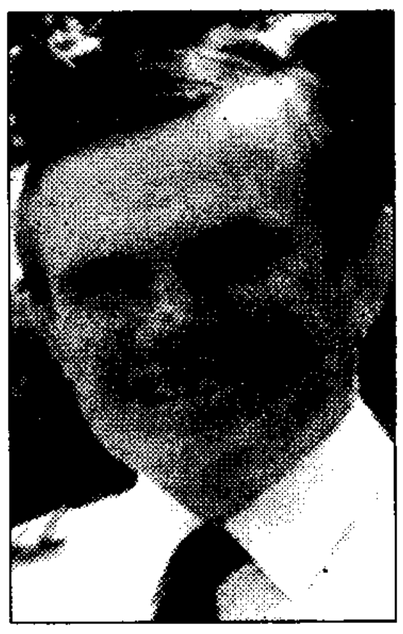
The matter came to the high court in front of Mr Justice Park for a preliminary hearing on 31 March this year. The courtroom was stuffed with top City lawyers, the senior ones on £400 an hour. The hearing was expected to last one day, but lasted for four. Mr Justice Park ordered that the active (employed) APS members should be independently represented and their legal expenses paid out of the pension fund.

He was clearly impressed by the size of the majorities against the proposed merger, and impatient with the delaying tactics of employers and trustees who seemed, as so often, to be in unison. A full high court hearing has been set down for 15 January next year.

In the meantime Mike Post has stood for election as a pensioners' trustee. He was surprised to discover that none of the candidates could issue an election address or indeed circulate any argument. The result was announced on 27 September. There was a 52.1 percent turn out — extremely high for a pension trustee election. The votes cast were: Mike Post, 9,827 (65.6 percent); Bob Bolt 5,108 (34.1 percent). The result is said to have caused intense dismay in the office of Lord Marshall, but equally intense celebration among British Airways pensioners.







Left to right: Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge, Derek Stevens and Mike Post

SUICIDE ROLL OF SHAME

SINCE last *Eye*'s report on the suicide of 17-year-old Kevin Henson while on remand in Feltham Young Offenders' Institution, four more vulnerable young inmates have hanged themselves in our "Dickensian" jails.

Four nights after Kevin created a noose from his bedsheet and hanged himself from pipes in his cell, in the depths of despair 18-year-old Luke Jacobsen did the same thing. Then on 26 September both Wayne McMillian, another 18 year old, killed himself in Glen Parva and 20-year-old Kerry Lambourne hanged herself in Eastwood Park adult prison. The following day Jaime Standley added his name to the sad litany bringing the numbers of cell suicides this year to a total of 16 teenagers and young adults — the highest rate ever in our penal history.

It is too early to say what private agonies drove the four individuals over the edge, but what seems inevitable is that as the gloom of winter sets in, without radical changes in Britain's penal system the number of suicides is likely to rise even more steeply. Despite this, the latest in a series of reports on cutting prison suicides — Sir David "Rambo" Ramsbotham's Suicide is Everyone's Concern — has been on the desks of ministers and prison managers for more than a year.

Sir David blames worsening overcrowding and a lack of meaningful activity for inmates who are locked up doing nothing for many hours a day. With jails holding far more inmates than they were built to contain, overstretched staff cannot provide activities or notice changes that show particular inmates are at risk. He blames poor management for not ensuring that good suicide prevention policies are enforced, and says too many people with drink, drug and mental health problems are wrongly kept in jail instead of receiving proper treatment. The basic design of cells often make it far too easy for inmates to hang themselves with exposed bars and pipes providing obvious ligature points.

As Rambo himself will admit, there is nothing new in his report. His predecessor, Stephen Tumim, penal reform groups, frustrated coroners and Inquest, the group which monitors deaths in custody, have for years detailed how these deaths could have been avoided. In opposition Labour supported calls to divert young people and less serious offenders from custody into community rehabilitation programmes, and for greater resources to enable jails to do more than simply warehouse people.

But in power the party has been building child jails and locking up ever greater numbers of young people in institutions that are ill equipped to deal with their needs. Most of the 16 children and young adults who have taken their lives this year were either awaiting trial or were sentenced for non-violent offences like theft and burglary.

Kevin Henson was on remand for the more serious charge of malicious wounding, but he also had a serious drink problem for which it would appear he was receiving no help. After his death last month, Deborah Coles, co-director of Inquest, wrote to Paul Boateng, the prisons minister, with copies to home secretary Jack Straw, Martin Narey, the director general of the prison service, and Rambo, demanding that the minister take action. She said there were serious concerns about the ability of staff at Feltham to properly care for those in its custody "that warrant independent investigation".

With no votes to be gained in creating a decent, humane penal policy or preventing prison suicides, it is perhaps not surprising that the only person to respond to her concerns was Rambo. In the prison department the five places vacated by the young suicides are already filled and its lock 'em up business as usual.

WHAT A CRACKER!

THE *Eye* has a copy of the findings of the investigatory committee of the British Psychological Society into its member Paul Britton — not long ago one of the most sought-after "experts" by police forces around the country.

Mr Britton's expertise was not so much in his academic qualifications as in his claims as a "profiler", in which he said he could identify types of criminals from studying crimes. Despite its rather flimsy scientific basis, profiling became a popular first resort for detectives and Britton became an adviser to police and murder hunts everywhere.

Among his more celebrated triumphs was his profile of a kidnapper as a hunky giant of a man of enormous strength (the kidnapper, Michael Sams, who was eventually caught by quite other methods, turned out to be a small man with one leg); his intervention in the Carl Bridgewater murder case in which he enthusiastically backed the confession of Pat Molloy against the considered and careful opinion of other police advisers (the Molloy confession turned out to be absolute rubbish and was eventually thrown out by the appeal court; and the expensive hunt for a satanic gang which was reportedly guilty of the most horrific offences on altars (this story dates back to some crazed fantasies of a Leeds woman endorsed by Britton and finally, after £1m worth of police inquiries, exposed as drivel).

Britton's sensational exploits are fully covered in his 1997 book *The Jigsaw Man* and are recounted all over again in a new book to be published in November. The blurb for the book describes it modestly as "a remarkable journey into the recesses of the human mind".

To act as a profiler Britton required at least one professional qualification: a charter from the British Psychological Society. This charter led to a complaint against him that has now been investigated by the society's committee. It accuses the latter-day Cracker of a series of offences involving professional misconduct in connection with the arrest and charge of Colin Stagg for the 1992 murder on Wimbledon Common of Rachel Nickell. It was Stagg's solicitor Ian Ryan who complained to the society in 1994.

Paul Britton

Chief among the charges is that Britton "offered psychological advice and support to the police in the conduct of a covert police operation which was not supported by accepted scientific and psychological evidence in the area of offender profiling".

A number of important organisations will be following the BPS hearing with interest - not least the home office and the Association of Chief Police Officers' profiling subcommittee, to both of which "Cracker" Britton was an official adviser. The chairman of the subcommittee was the current Metropolitan police commissioner John Stevens. And a prominent member was the Met's scourge of racists, Commander John Grieve.

PS: The former policewoman who was ordered by her bosses, on Britton's advice, to seek to seduce Stagg into a relationship with her and in the process to confess to the murder sued the police for the stress and indignity she was caused. According to the London Evening Standard of 18 September, the Met has decided not to risk the embarrassment of a tribunal case and is considering paying her off with £100,000 of our money.

FOSCAN (OR CAN'T AS THE CASE MAY BE)

THERE was a double whammy for the British biotech industry on 26 September.

First came the not altogether surprising news of another failure of marimastat, one of the "wonder" cancer drugs tested by British Biotech. The grim fortunes of British Biotech and its disgusting sacking and smearing of Andy Millar, the whistleblower who exposed the failure of the wonder drug trials, have been fully covered in past *Eyes*.

The second disaster was less predictable and caused a greater shock on the stock exchange. Shares in Scotia Holdings, one of Britain's oldest biotech companies, lost 61 percent of their market value after the US food and drug administration rejected the firm's main hope, the cancer drug Foscan.

The history of doubts about Foscan makes interesting reading for those who believe in the independence of the mainstream medical media. On 6 May the *British Medical Journal* published a "drugs note" entitled "Burns After Photodynamic Therapy". The article, written by doctors and specialists from the burns centre at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, reported that "14 healthy men aged between 20 and 26 were given a single dose of temoporfin (Foscan)", a photosensitiser which makes malignant tumours more sensitive so they can be more easily identified and cured.

The report went on: "After two weeks they [the unlucky 14] were exposed to a test dose of sunlight. Twelve of them showed no photosensitivity and were told to avoid prolonged exposure to bright sunlight for three months. Within 48 hours of discharge, six of the 12 men had developed partial thickness burns on the left forearm and more superficial burns on other body areas after transient exposure to daylight. Healing was much slower than with conventional thermal injury and several men were prominently scarred. As the men had signed disclaimers before the trial they were not automatically entitled to compensation."

There was an immediate reaction from Scotia, whose shares fell from 150p to 120p. Two company press releases questioned the research behind the 6 May note in the *BMJ*. A stream of letters to the journal from scientists supporting Foscan suggested that the burns had been caused not by the drug but by the way it had been administered.

There was no writ for libel against the BMJ — not even a threat of one. When the editor of the *BMJ*, Richard Smith, tried to post on his website an explanation of some minor aspects of the article, he was threatened with legal proceedings by one of the authors of the original article. "The *BMJ*", wrote Smith, "has been caught in a whirlpool of spin created mostly for the benefit of the stock market. Nobody has challenged the facts of the original drug point."

Even more direct was a letter from two plastic surgeons at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. "These patients suffered serious burns and we believe that a causative agent was Foscan." There was no doubt at all that the human guinea pigs used to help the marketing of Foscan had been badly injured and were not even entitled to compensation.

A rather more obsequious view was taken by the mainstream media's medical correspondents. *The Times* reported: "Scotia Holdings staged a recovery yesterday after the BMJ admitted to shortcomings in its report that sent shares in the pharmaceutical group crashing last month." Even more slavish was an anonymous "senior City biotech analyst", who was quoted in the *Daily Telegraph* as saying: "This statement [from the company] is a complete victory for Scotia and has basically vindicated the drug."

Well, the weeks dragged on without any noticeable increase in the Scotia share price, and the US food and drug administration has now issued its rather more realistic verdict on Foscan, which fell a little short of a complete victory for Scotia Holdings.

BARNSLEY BARNEY

ON 8 June 1994 Mark Barnsley, a 33-year-old Sheffield father and specialist outdoor writer, took a break from writing a book and went for walk with his new-born baby and a friend. They stopped for a beer in the Pomona pub — one of the worst decisions he ever made.

He and his friend Jane Leathborough encountered a group of students celebrating the end of exams. There was a nasty fight and, six years on, Barnsley is in Full Sutton jail half-way through a 12-year sentence for wounding five of the students with a knife. A dossier now before the criminal cases review commission (CCRC) suggests, however, that Barnsley suffered a serious miscarriage of justice.

According to his solicitor Danny Simpson, Barnsley has no history of violent or aggressive behaviour. Character witnesses suggest he was warm, kind and caring; psychiatric reports say he was "stable, mature, responsible and pleasant". Yet the prosecution claimed that he took on the students — deliberately knifing five of them — because he took exception to comments they had made to Leathborough while he was at the bar.

According to Barnsley and Leathborough, however, the students were drunk and insulted first Leathborough and then both of them when they left the pub with baby Daisy. Mark went to remonstrate but was told to "fuck off" and was attacked. He said he was hit on the head with a bottle or heavy glass, punched and kicked.

He claims one of the students produced a knife, which dropped to the floor. He wrested it from one of the students who was trying to get it and cut his hand in the process. From that point on he tried to escape, but over a distance of about 150 yards he was pursued and attacked. "I did not knowingly inflict the wounds. However, in so far as I did, it was accidental and trying to escape a frenzied attack," he said.

The knife has never been found. The students all denied having a knife and no one had seen Barnsley with a knife before the attack.

Barnsley himself suffered two large cuts to the head, a broken nose, cracked ribs, a tooth knocked out, bruising and a gash on his hand consistent with his account of grabbing the knife. Though all the independent witnesses support his account of trying to flee and that he came under sustained assault, Barnsley was convicted.

It may be that the severity of the students' wounds — one student had a 3cm cut to his stomach that was 2cms deep and another had two chest wounds that were three cms deep — that caused the jury to reach their guilty verdicts. It may also be because the trial heard that a book called *All-in fighting manual*, written for British soldiers in the 1940s, had been found at Barnsley's home.

The prosecution suggested Barnsley had used it as a training manual. In fact the book had belonged to Alistair Raynolds, a friend of Barnsley's who had committed suicide. It was given to Barnsley by Reynolds' parents along with other 40s books and memorabilia, but Barnsley was not given the chance to call the Reynolds to confirm this.

It has now emerged that a forensic pathologist's report suggesting only minimal or moderate force could have caused all the wounds was never put to the jury to counter the prosecution claim that considerable force was required and it was therefore deliberate. The dossier with the CCRC also reveals that blood tests on the students showed that four of the five injured students had consumed cannabis as well alcohol. On oath, they had denied ever taking cannabis.

The dossier also raises doubts about the prosecution's inability to trace two key named students who were said to be at the scene. Barnsley's solicitors believe they may have crucial new evidence that may not support the prosecution case. And it raises concerns about a prosecution decision not to call an independent witness, whose evidence appears to cast doubt on the students' version of events.

Though the CCRC has been aware of Barnsley's case for a year, a case review manager has still not been appointed.

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

THE selfless decision of the bearded wonder Richard Branson seemingly not to put up any of the £50m guarantee required by the lottery commission was hailed by his acolytes as further proof that there is no link between the People's Lottery (prop: R. Branson) and the financially questionable Virgin group (prop: R. Branson).

Well, that is one way of looking at it. Another is to suggest that once again Branson has persuaded his partners — in this case the suppliers to the lottery — to take all of the risk in return for participating in his great idea.

Just how much of a reward they will share remains to be seen. Branson has been very coy about what he will receive in the form of management, administration or royalty charges from the People's Lottery. The point to remember is that although Branson hails the People's Lottery as "not for profit", he and all the suppliers are not playing for free. They all expect to profit from the lottery's success even if it is not run to make a profit.

The lottery commission was clearly nervous about relying just on Branson to guarantee the winners' payouts, despite his supposed billionaire status. They may well have had in mind the "can't pay, won't pay" stand-off between Branson and the record companies supplying his Our Price chain earlier this year which was only resolved by the sale of a stake in Virgin Atlantic Airways.

The commission's nervousness was justified by the lack of alacrity with which Branson himself stepped forward with a personal cheque or guarantee for the £50m. No doubt there was concern that the offshore trusts which ultimately control Virgin could not or would not pay out in the event of a bank-breaking number of winners guaranteed £1m.

The response of the People's Lottery was to say that such an event is only statistically possible and has never happened. However, that is not the case. An *Eye* reader reports that on several occasions in recent years US lotteries have faced the situation where the guaranteed payout was far greater than the amount staked.

"Mass Cash", run by the state of Massachusetts, had a $100,000 guaranteed payout. On one occasion there were 34 winners costing the state $3.4m. On another occasion one winner had 12 correct entries while other winners have successfully made lower multiple bets.

The Pennsylvania lottery has twice had to pay out much more than the amount wagered because of multiple winners. In one case the state had to pay $9.5m and in the second a whopping $39m.

Because US lotteries are run by the states there is a backer of last resort somewhat richer than Branson. But with the People's Lottery the answer would appear to be that, under its rules, if too many people's numbers came up they would simply refuse to pay. All of which would do for the People's Lottery and those much talked about good causes what he has done for Virgin Trains.

IT SOMETIMES seems as if the Guinness affair will never die — in the courts at least. Ten years after they were convicted, Ernest Saunders' three greedy little helpers — Gerald Ronson, Tony Parnes and Jack Lyons — are still trying to rewrite history. This time with the aid of the European court of human rights and the new human rights act which came into force this week.

Last month's decision by the European court that the Guinness Three had not had a fair trial because they had been forced to admit their actions to inspectors from the Department of Timidity & Inaction prompted confident suggestions that their convictions would be overturned and there would be large cheques in compensation for the jail terms served by Ronson and Parnes.

But that may be wishful thinking on the part of their lawyers and those sympathetic journalists who see Ronson in particular as a victim. The truth is that all three were very greedy rich men who willingly manipulated the Guinness share price to help Saunders win his 1986 battle for Distillers in return for secret £3-5m payments disguised either offshore and/or by false invoices.

That much was made glaringly obvious by the belated DTI report published after the court of appeal had in 1995 rejected their appeals for a second time

COMPLETELY WET

on the grounds that there was ample evidence on which the jury could convict.

It was noticeable that even the European court did not say the three were innocent or should not have been convicted. And almost four years after he achieved a similar "victory", Saunders is still a convicted fraudster who has rightly received no compensation despite similar predictions at the time of his claimed vindication by the European court.

Should the Guinness Three decide to try their luck again in the court of appeal it is difficult to see how they would be treated any more kindly than in 1995 when the judges rejected their appeal that the use of the DTI evidence by the prosecution was unfair because there had been collusion between the DTI and Scotland Yard to use their enforced DTI testimony.

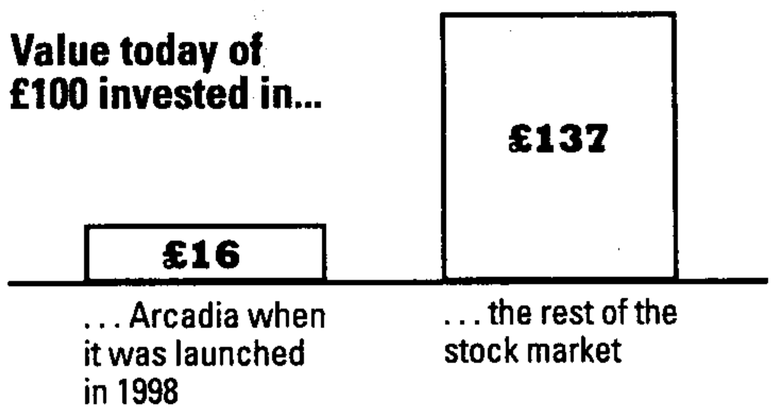
"The issues in this case were essentially stark and simple. They turned on the jury's view as to whether these appellants were proved to have acted dishonestly. The combination of indemnities paid by Guinness to purchasers of its own shares, the false invoices, the huge success fees and the failure to disclose either indemnities or success fees even to the Guinness board provided ample evidence of a dishonest scheme in which all the appellants played their parts," declared the judges headed by the then lord chief justice, Lord Taylor.

The court of appeal anticipated that Saunders might prevail on the human rights point but still found against him and the others. As Labour has said that the courts are to take a "robust" view of the new law, particularly on old cases, the Taylor verdict may prove difficult to change especially for such unworthy "victims".

Reasons also why perhaps even the European court was unsympathetic to all of their claims other than the self-incrimination point.

Stock Horror

Top Man-to-Principles fashion retailer Arcadia, run by John Hoerner



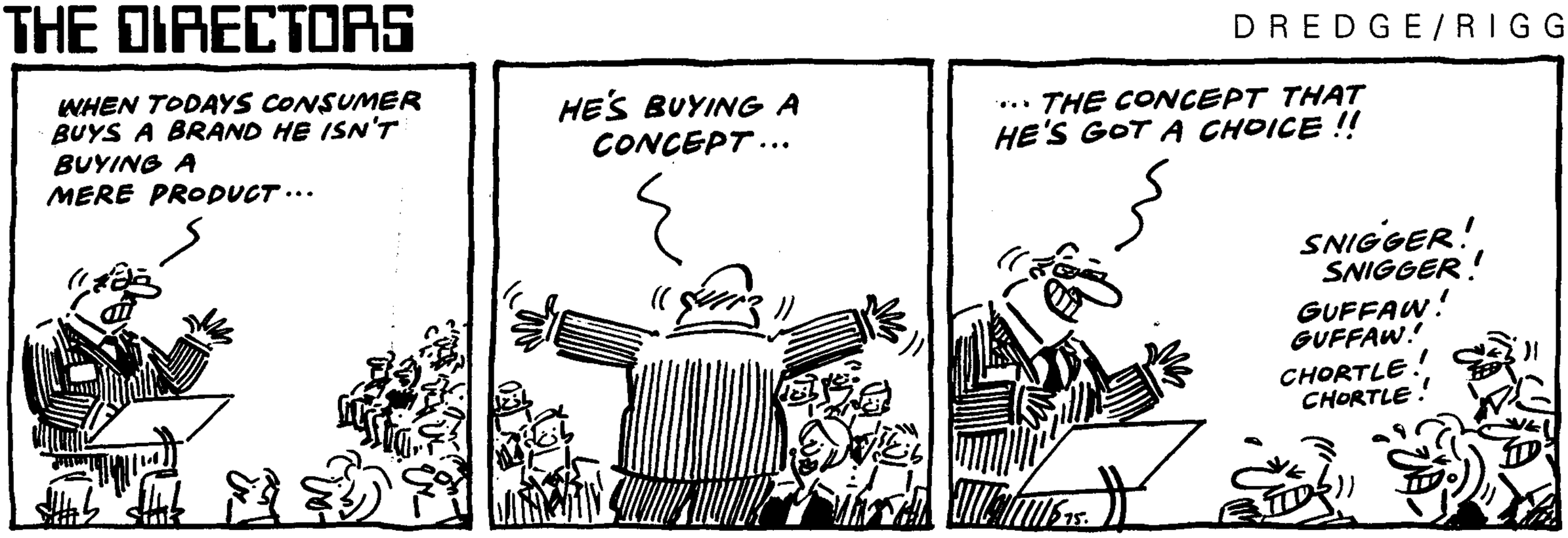
SHAREHOLDERS in the London Stock Exchange, while licking their lips at the unforeseen riches about to come their way as the barbarians circle the once great temple of Mammon, are somewhat irritated that the suddenly active market in LSE shares is controlled by blue blooded brokers Cazenove, whose former senior partner John Kemp-Welch was also a former chairman of the exchange. Clearly there was no conflict of interest in allowing Cazenove to pick up a nice little earner by making all those who wish to deal become clients of the firm and pay a commission for the privilege.

THERE is something inevitable about any deal in which Paul Levinson, his family or associates are involved. It always end in tears and rage for shareholders and/or creditors.

Cut price CD outfit Point Group duly sank below the waves after the arrival of Levinson protégé Wilhelm Mitrich, whose track record left much to be desired. Now creditors are complaining that Mitrich has acquired the pick of the Point assets cheaply in order to rise phoenix-like again. A CD plant in Germany and assorted copyrights are all said to have either been acquired by or transferred to Mitrich before or since the receivership.

Hopefully receivers Grant Thornton will be compiling an appropriate report on Mitrich and the other Point directors.

'Slicker'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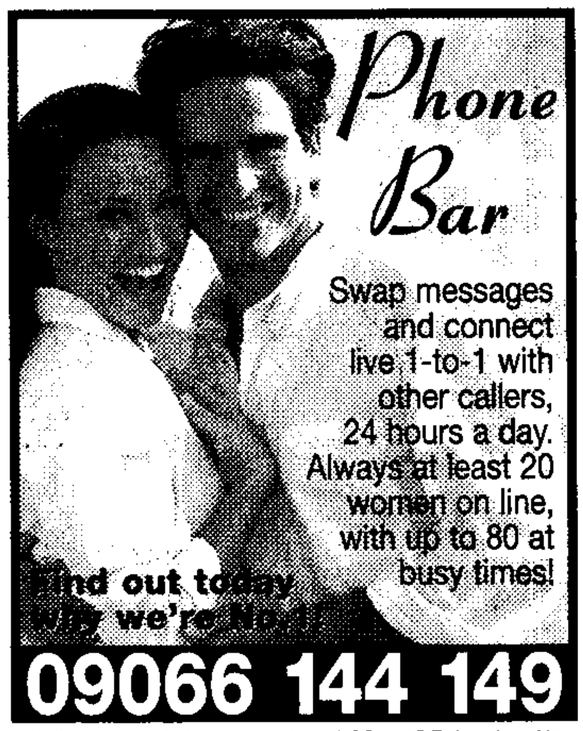
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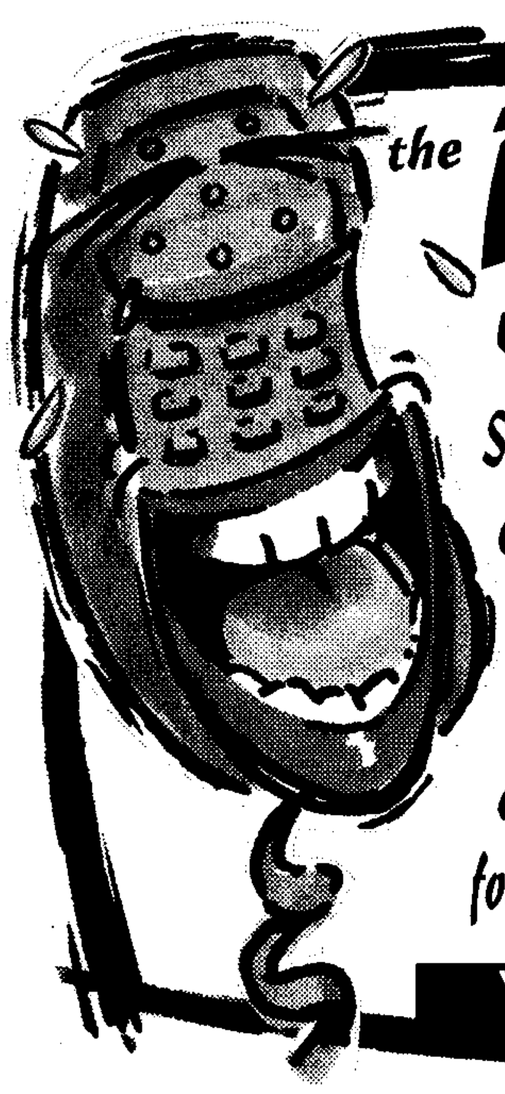

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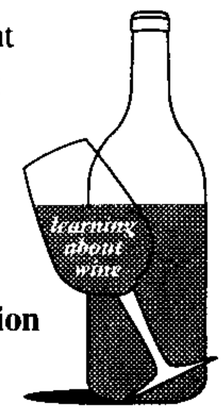

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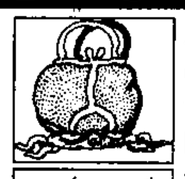
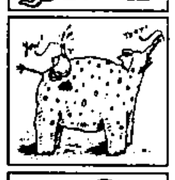


A selection of cartoons, illustrations and animated cels can be found on the **Cartoon Gallery Website**, from **Chris Riddell** to **Steve Bell, Alex** to **Appleby, Honeysett** to **Husband** and **McLachlan** to **Matt.**



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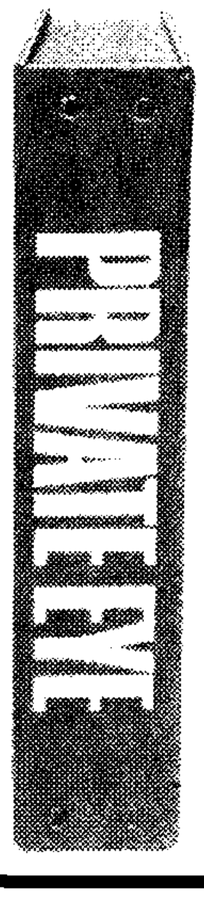

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WILDWIND! The best CATAMARAN, DINGHY AND WINDSURFING HOLIDAYS in the Med! 01920 584516 or www.wildwind.co.uk

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES... based at a pub! White water rafting, etc – www.theberwyn.co.uk Tel: 01490 430210.

NEW YORK! Friendly hotel alternatives: private B&Bs and apartments. Safe/ central. www.westvillagebb.com, tel: (212) 614-3034, UK fax 0845 127 4464.

EYE CONTACT

MAKE INTERESTING new friends UK/WORLDWIDE. Free details. DESTINY HEART (Dept PE) PO Box 10, Leeds, LS12 1YZ.

SUMAN MARRIAGE Bureau. Established 1972, members ABIA. Telephone No. 020 8571 5145 / www.s-m-b.com

SECRET PENPALS club. UK/International, adults only. Safe and secure letters exchange for the discreet and cautious. 3x27p stamps to EPPS, PO Box 36, Dartford, DA2 7ZU.

ATTACHED? Seeking romance? Call David at LOVING LINKS 020 7602 8727. Info line 0906 550 1361 (£1 per/min) – www.lovinglinks.co.uk.

RESPECTABLE SINCERE marriage-minded Thai ladies seek like-minded gentlemen. Free brochure. T.P.I. 01562 748600 (24hrs). www. thai-professional.com

CONTACT MAG for adults: over 900 photos. APPROVAL copy from: MATCH-MAKER, (S.76), Chorley, PR7 4BS. Or ring: 01257 480155 (24 hours).

THAI LADIES SEEK MARRIAGE – Superb videos. Colour brochure SIAM INTRODUCTIONS (established 14 years) – 01689 860880. www.siam-intro.com

ADDITIONS – 'ATTACHED' Discreet Loving Agency for married people. 020 8905 3304, 020 8958 9657. Established 1992.

THAI CONNECTION – WAIA approved. Over 550 marriages. 7-hour videos. Free brochure: 01582 481725.

PLUMP PARTNERS – National Dating Agency. Plump yourself or happy to meet someone who is? Ring 01352 715909.

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HEDONISM PARTIES. Adult Clubnights. Holidays. Attractive, uninhibited, funloving party animals. Couples, singles. S.A.E. Box 24405 London W5 5ZE. 09099 100185 (75p/min) – www.hedonism.org.uk

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Girls 18+, Women online,
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0906 361 1688

YOUNG LADIES worldwide seek pen-pals, friends, lifemates. Free details, photos! HERMES, Box 610188/S, 10922 Berlin, Germany. Fax: 0049 30 25299775.

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Calls cost 75p/min
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London NW2 4ZL
www.harmonypartners.co.uk

EYE LOVE

UNATTACHED ACADEMIC, 57 – suffering from Carol Vordermania – seeks Oxbridge graduate for meaningful relationship and possible cure. Box 3212.

LOVELY LADY – blonde, 50ish, wide interests, still gathering rosebuds – seeks honourable unattached gentleman with zest for life – for happy times. Box 0112.

PROF. MALE, unattached, medium height, GSOH – seeks lovely woman 30-40 who is intelligent, pretty, likes the nice things in life, laughs a lot – or hopes to – with the right man, is slim and, like me, non-smoking. Photo appreciated. Box 2021.

AMERICAN, 32, female, seeks established businessman – single only. Box 4301, Kailua-Kona, 96745, Hawaii, USA.

HANDSOME, 6', athletic kind, witty, cultured man, 32, successful lawyer – seeks loving; intelligent, dark, slim, curvaceous lady (perhaps of Indian or Arabic origin) for serious relationship. Please write with photo. Box 1612.

STRESSED-OUT Gloucestershire businessman seeks pretty 35-45 lady for discreet, romantic love affair. Must like flying. Box 0912.

SCATTY, ARTISTIC, professional dionysian piscean Larson-ist seeks single fridge-wielding hitchhiking martian. Box 0712.

NAUGHTY BUT NICE man WLTM nice but naughty woman, to be slightly sinful with – We are probably both old enough to know better. Hampshire/London. Box 1212.

SWF SEEKS SWM 40s-50s – for special times. GSOH and intelligence preferred. Loyalty and kindness highly valued. London area. Box 1112.

DISCREET DALLIANCE with daring damsel sought by caring mature professional (m) south east. Box 1412.

HAPPY, CHEERFUL, cat loving Francophile news junkie – no angst – Suffolk-based freelance journalist. Good cook, very sociable and enjoys wine, conversation, art, opera, cinema – keen gardener and occasional sailor. Are you also kind, generous, entertaining and about 50? Send a photo and tell me why you'd like to share my life. Box 2912.

RAMBLER MALE, 43, compass going haywire, seeks female. West Midlands. Box 0312.

FOOLISH MALE, 27, short, ugly, GSOH – WLTM forgiving F for lunch – no going Dutch. Let's paint the town red high glóss! Photo appreciated. Box 1912.

ATHLETIC, open minded, intelligent, fun and tanned. Male (37) seeking slim, attractive, independent female for uncomplicated liaisons maybe more later if both wish. Please reply with photo to – positiveexperience@hotmail.com

GENTLEMAN, 54,
kind, generous, caring
wishes to meet lady
confidante/mistress
to share
occasional quality liaisons/LTR.
Genuine, positive, discreet,
mutually rewarding friendship
assured and hoped for.
Northwest area or will travel.
All correspondence replied to.
Reply
Box 2812.

ATHLETIC LAWYER, 33 – occasionally mischievous, seeks sophisticated – occasionally strict – lady. Box 2612.

FOREPLAY INCLUDED. Tim (45, single) seeks a woman (25-60) and simple, safe physical relationship. London/SE. Box 1811.

NICE GUY, attached, 35, seeks illicit liaisons. Discretion guaranteed – superchap2000@hotmail.com

TALL, STRICT, successful, assertive man Bristol/South West, 42, seeks a naughty younger woman to share the golden Autumn with. I love eating out and eating in, nights on the town and weekends in the country, laughter – and the rich tapestry of life. If you would like a fun relationship with some spice then please write to me with your telephone number to Box 1911.

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WHEN IN LONDON.
Elderly, but humorous
continental company director
wants to entertain
and be entertained
by charming young lady,
any race or nationality.
Box 3112.

FUN LOVING very solvent, married, slim, 50 year old blue-eyed Warwickshire chap, wants discreet relationship with lady, 35 to 50. Photo please. Box 2512.

41 YEAR OLD architect, attached, seeks similar lady for amorous liaisons. Box 3512.

SURPRISE correspondents wanted for my ex-soldier rough diamond brother working in jungle on humanitarian development – missing home comforts and female company. Box 1312.

"IT WOULD BE an honour to make love to you. I would honour your body." He then pops a Viagra and falls asleep on the job. Can you do better? Expat/F, 50's, divorced, smoker – loves Fado, seeks genuine, stable, LTR. Plymouth. Box 3412.

TIME TO UNWIND – nice 40s male with zest for life and exquisite massage technique – seeks female to pamper. Any age or status. Discreet. Box 2412.

INTERESTING, SOLVENT, male, writer, 52 seeks occasionally unassertive woman, for relationship, conversation and meandering adventure. London. Box 2312.

DAUGHTER SEEKS gentleman for Mummsy – widowed, tall, educated, good-looking, smoker, slim. No rotters. – mummsy1000@hotmail.com – Box 1012.

SINGLE MALE, 46, honest – wltm uncomplicated female, 35-45 for BBQ's, soirees et al. London area. Clipperrex10 – Box 2121.

BROODY WOMAN seeks virile man to do the business. No strings. Box 1512.

ASIAN MAN, 26, single, likes theatre, music, books, art, eating out. Seeks unattached woman for fun and possible LTR. Age/status unimportant. London. Box 0412.

ATTRACTIVE, SUCCESSFUL, professional assertive male seeks non-assertive professional female for extreme fun - must have sense of humour and live in central or west London. If you are successful and need adventure then send information with pic to – theultimateman@hotmail.com

BIRD IN CAGE – classy, exotic and beautiful, awaits dishy discreet lover (30-40) for fun-filled rescue. E-mail rescuebird@hotmail.com

EXCEPTIONALLY beautiful woman with stunning personality seeks to broaden her horizons. Only intelligent, attractive, sensual and caring professionals (31-41) need apply. Email: silktapestry@hotmail.com

NOSE LIKE A GNU, head like a chinchilla, but I own my own business, so I'll pay for dinner. Notts. Box 3612.

EYE-COMPANY

MAN, 50, seeks female companion to visit Southern India during Christmas/New Year. Share expenses. Box 0610.

IRRITATING MALE pseudo-intellectual urgently requires female (angry depressive dyke preferred) for cheapskate overland trip to Florence via Auschwitz-Birkenau. Box 2212.

DICTATE YOUR AD WITH CREDIT/ DEBIT CARD
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OR FAX 020 7923 5401
E-mail: privateeye@communications-team.co.uk
MAIL YOUR AD OR BOX NUMBER REPLY TO:
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3-11 PINE STREET, LONDON EC1R 0JH

Millions of people are still working and claiming benefit.

It's not fraud, it's government policy.

Getting people off welfare and into work is not only very desirable - it's government policy.

The trouble is that when people who have been dependent on benefits eventually get a job they often find that they are paid the national minimum wage.

And the minimum wage - set by the government - is so low that they still need state benefits to bring it up to a level that will provide for their basic needs.

What this means is that taxpayers' money is being used to subsidise the wage bills of private companies, most of which make good profits.

It should come as no surprise therefore that the loudest voices opposing a higher minimum wage are the very employers who are receiving this indirect handout. They say that if the minimum wage was equivalent to a living wage, jobs would simply disappear.

But there is ample evidence that people who are paid an adequate wage are far more productive than those who are living on the poverty line.

So much so, that the modest amounts required are more than repaid by increased output and profits.

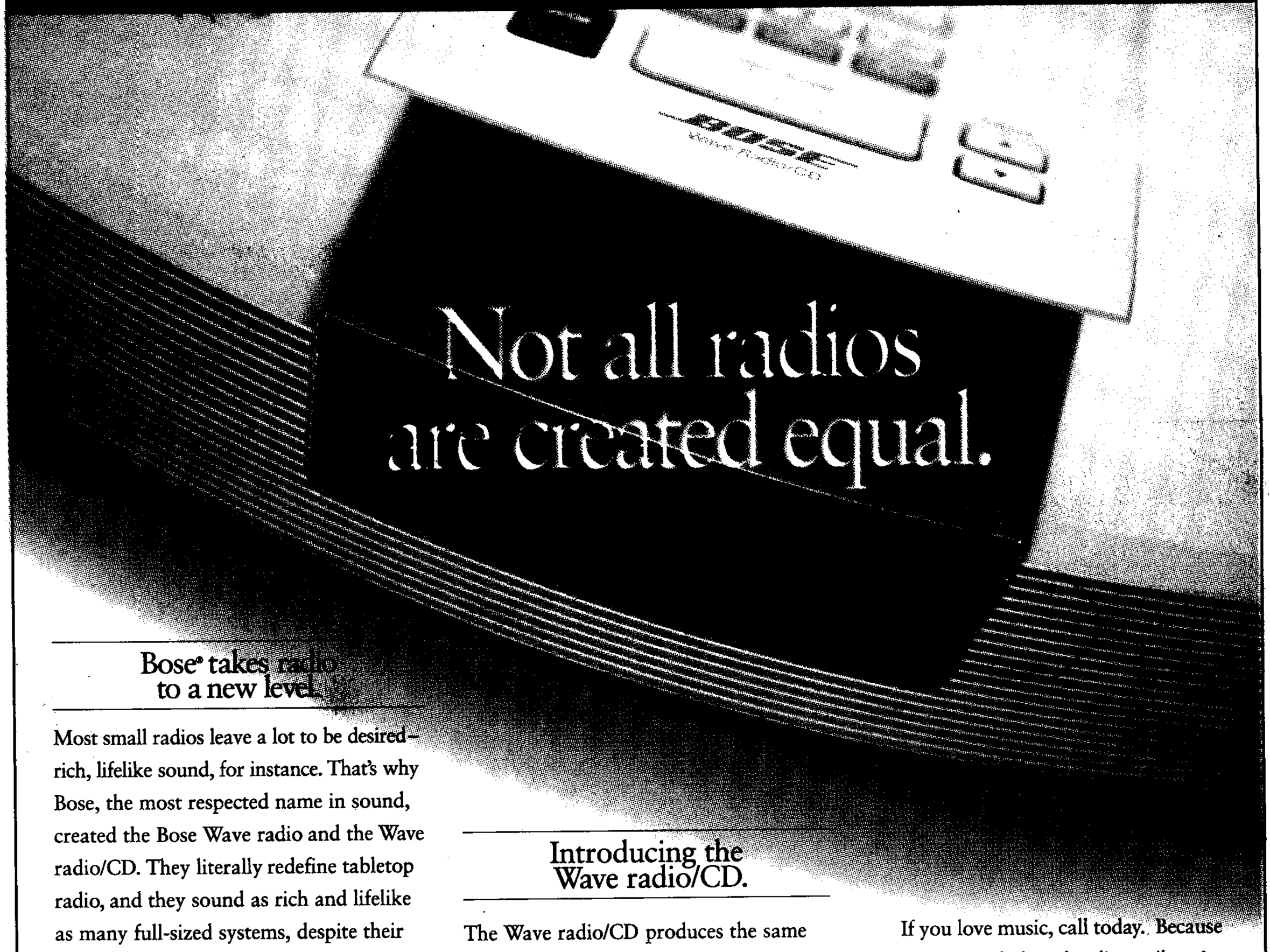
A prosperous economy with a well paid workforce means the government will receive more in tax revenue and pay out less on welfare benefits.

A national minimum wage of £5 per hour will help to achieve and maintain this objective.

For more information on the National Minimum Wage and other workplace issues, visit our website at www.unison.org.uk, or to join us call 0800 5 97 97 50.

UNISON

Introducing the Wave Radio/CD



Bose® takes radio to a new level.

Most small radios leave a lot to be desired – rich, lifelike sound, for instance. That's why Bose, the most respected name in sound, created the Bose Wave radio and the Wave radio/CD. They literally redefine tabletop radio, and they sound as rich and lifelike as many full-sized systems, despite their small size.

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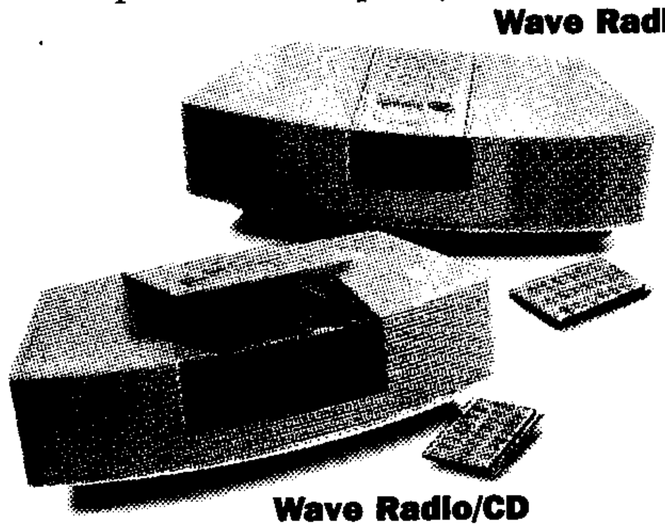
Wave Radio



Wave Radio/CD

Introducing the Wave radio/CD.

The Wave radio/CD produces the same breakthrough sound – sound that resonates with incredible, lifelike bass.

The Wave radio and the Wave radio/CD come with a handy credit card-sized remote control, dual alarms, and six AM and six FM station pre-set buttons. In addition, the Wave radio/CD remote lets you control all CD functions.

And the Wave radio/CD measures just 4⅜"H × 14"W × 8½"D, so it fits almost anywhere.

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The Wave radio/CD is available directly from Bose.

So call 0800 022 044 to learn more about our 30 day in-home trial and 100% satisfaction guarantee.

When you call, be sure to ask about our convenient interest-free payment plan.

If you love music, call today. Because you haven't truly heard radio until you've heard the Bose Wave radio and Wave radio/CD.

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